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THE

PUBLISHING HOUSE

OF

BLACKWOOD

Yours most affectionately

Wm Blackwood

Annals of a Publishing House

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

AND

HIS SONS

THEIR MAGAZINE AND FRIENDS

Library
Science

BY

MRS OLIPHANT

VOLUME II.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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1897

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD

AND

HIS SONS.

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PUBLICATIONS.

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"YOU care nothing," says Hogg in one of his abusive letters, "for anything that does not come under the beard of Geordie Buchanan."[1] And there is some truth in the reproach from the beginning of the Magazine, especially from the famous seventh number, in which Mr Blackwood began fully to control and govern it. His attention had been so concentrated on the new organ, that other matters attracted him in a minor degree, and his personal list

[1] Referring to the portrait of George Buchanan, regarded by Mr Blackwood as the typical Scottish scholar, which from the beginning has appeared on the cover of 'Maga.'

of new publications was not large. I say his personal list, for through his correspondents he had—according to the custom of the time, which made almost every new book the property of two or three publishing firms in partnership—a hand in most things that were going on. The lists advertised, first on the brown cover of the Magazine, later as business grew in the more decorous pages sewn in with it, are amazingly characteristic of this habit of the period. On one side of the page are, for example, "Books published for Messrs Cadell & Davies and William Blackwood," while on the other the inscription stands, "Books published for William Blackwood and Messrs Cadell & Davies." John Murray and William Blackwood, William Blackwood and John Murray, are similarly interchanged; and many other names come in, even that of a local bookseller in Newcastle, part of whose venture the Edinburgh publisher had taken upon him. In this way he had his share in almost all the adventures of the trade, and was the joint-publisher of 'Childe Harold' and 'Beppo' and 'Parisina' (though he refused 'Don Juan'), and even the 'Story of Rimini,' of which his Magazine made such havoc. His, I think, is the second name in the advertising list of works so widely apart as the 'Cenci' and some of the books of the Rev. Charles Simeon: a wider latitude could scarcely be. For some of these works in which he had but a share, and that not the chief one, he showed the greatest zeal; but in all his own publications he always acted according to a sound and sober judgment which very seldom erred, taking no one, not even Sir Walter as we have seen, at his own showing, but giving forth his fearless opinion without

respect of persons, in a manner which it was impossible not to respect, whether we agree with it or not. This characteristic quality probably limited his lists, as authors are often deficient in apprehension of the wisdom and the wit so exercised. But his approbation was as warm as his criticism was clear, and he was subject now and then to an access of pure literary enthusiasm which carried his judgment away. He was engaged in some large publications, such as Kerr's 'Travels,' from the very earliest period of his career as a publisher, and was very soon charged with various periodical undertakings, such, for instance, as the 'Edinburgh Encyclopædia,' which dates so far back as 1808. In 1816 Murray, his principal partner for the time, writes to him with "a corrected copy of the last number of the 'Quarterly Review.'" "You must print an edition of 1000 copies as fast as you can," says the London publisher, "for I have only 184 copies left out of the 7000; and I am sorry this is all I can do to reward thy careful anxiety to give you the honour of a Scotch edition."

One of the most important of the early works published independently by Blackwood was the 'Life of John Knox' by the Rev. Thomas M'Crie, a minister of one of those first secessions from the Scottish Church which considered themselves the representatives of the Covenanters and early Reformers, and have of late days proved so useful to writers of fiction in the peculiarities of the Auld Lichts. Mr M'Crie had been led by his professional studies to some researches among such original documents relating to the time of Knox as were accessible, at a period when historical research was as yet in its infancy. It is not perhaps a book

which we should now refer to as the authority, but it was in those days something like a revelation, delivering Knox from the contemptuous indifference with which he had come to be regarded during the reign of the "Moderates" over the Church of Scotland, and making him visible in a more authentic shape than that of the popular demigod, apostle of freedom and democracy, which the fervid but uninstructed imagination of the country had made of its favourite hero. This book was published in 1811, and was highly successful, reaching to a fifth edition in the course of a few years; and in the year 1818 negotiations were going on for the joint publication of the second work of the same writer, the 'Life of Andrew Melville,' a book which does not seem to have attained the same success as that on Knox, the scholar and churchman being a less valiant and perhaps also less interesting figure than the great Reformer. This was the subject of a correspondence between Blackwood and Murray, in which the London publisher expresses himself far from satisfied with the terms to which Blackwood had agreed:—

John Murray to W. Blackwood.

LONDON, *June* 13, 1818.

I am sorry to say that I cannot conceive on what principles of calculation your proposal is formed. At the rate you propose, you take upon yourself the whole risque of the work's success, and the certainty of losing from £50 to perhaps £100, after an edition of 1250 copies has been sold; you suffer yourself to be restricted also in the number of the edition and the price of the book, things which, when large sums are given, should in fairness be left to the discretion of the publisher. You spoke at first of the moderate terms that would be expected, and you are planning the highest I ever remember. A

good poem, you know, or a good novel, is adapted to all classes of readers, and there is ample room for speculation in the unlimited classes of purchasers. In my opinion your terms are infinitely higher than those for the 'Tales of my Landlord.'

The expenses of paper and print will be at least .	£400
Add to this for author	525
	£925
Twelve hundred and fifty at 14s. trade price, is only	875
Loss	£50

Add advertising and the probable extent of a few sheets beyond Knox, may make this £50 £100.

Now, really, I do not know that I am illiberal in my proposals to authors, certainly I wish to be otherwise, but I will be glad to know your cool sentiments after looking into this statement.

A rash, foolish, and generous Quixote of a publisher, one would be inclined to say. The following was Mr Blackwood's "cool sentiments" after a few days' consideration :—

W. Blackwood to John Murray.

20*th June* 1818.

The principle upon which I thought it advisable to agree to Dr M'Crie's terms was simply this, that, feeling perfectly satisfied as to the value of the work, I did not consider it any great risk, as two editions would be sure to sell, which would leave a handsome enough profit. I considered the terms as high enough, but what is really good is not to be had without paying for it. As to risk, there can be none, as two editions will infallibly sell, let the book be what it will. However, backed by your opinion, I have prevailed upon Dr M'Crie to allow the price to be 24s. As by this means the first edition will produce £1000, I hope you will have no objections to take the half of the book.

"I can see," says Dr M'Crie in a letter without

date, evidently between these two letters, "that Mr Murray is afraid that I am taking advantage of your circumstances to propose high terms. As he does not know me, I can forgive him this wrong." Blackwood's circumstances were those of a man half drowned in the surging waves that rose around him at the beginning of the stormy career of the Magazine, but bating neither heart nor hope. Mr Murray finally accepted the risk (or "risque," as he always writes it) of half of the book; and thereupon sends a complimentary message to Mr M'Crie assuring him of the gratification he feels in "having the honour to be his publisher"—a kind of tribute which, money considerations apart, and all eventualities considered, Mr Murray was always ready to pay. He also accepted at the same time a share in Hogg's 'Jacobite Relics.' He had a few months previously become part proprietor of Miss Ferrier's novel 'Marriage,' of which Blackwood writes: "I shall be happy to give you the charge of it in London. At the same time, I by no means wish you to publish it unless you yourself should consider it an object, and be willing to advertise it, &c., as you do your own books. I have given you the first offer, and I hope you will accept or reject it with the same frankness." This also Mr Murray accepted with some grumblings as to the price. But there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, and in respect to one at least of these works the London publisher's proceedings were exceedingly trying to his partner in the North. M'Crie's book and Hogg's were not ready, as appears, until the winter of 1819—and here it would seem an extraordinary difficulty occurred. The books were

neither advertised nor published in London. "Both authors are wondering not to see their books advertised," writes Blackwood, who seems to have sent off letter after letter without receiving any reply. At last there came a letter from Murray withdrawing from Dr M'Crie's book altogether, and justifying himself by the angry reproach that the book had been published in Edinburgh without waiting for its simultaneous issue in London. Blackwood defended himself hotly from this charge, upbraiding his partner in return for having taken eight days to do what might have been done in as many minutes. "You say," he continues with indignation, "that it is an unjust thing to publish in Edinburgh before publishing in London. I beg leave to correct this; for 'Melville' was shipped eight days before I published here, and it is your own fault if it was not longer delayed." In this uncomfortable way Mr Murray gave up the honour of being Dr M'Crie's publisher, and for a time there was something more than coldness between the heads of the two houses. The 'Life of Melville' was handed over to Messrs Cadell & Davies, and seems to have done tolerably well. It is to be hoped that poor Dr M'Crie, with his small stipend and his large family, received his money in the meantime while London and Edinburgh wrangled over him. A partnership in books was evidently a delicate relationship, and subjected, as Mr Murray would have said, to "risques" greater even than those of ordinary publication. Murray remained a partner in Hogg's 'Jacobite Relics,' which was not very successful, and in 'Marriage,' which was, but in respect of all other arrangements there was a

serious breach—a settling of accounts and a severance of interests.

In the same year Blackwood published Dr Brewster's 'Essay on the Kaleidoscope,' a recent invention of his own, and apparently supposed to be of more importance than it has turned out to be. In October 1818, before the breach above related, I find a letter to Murray with an account of a new undertaking which Dr Brewster had at the same time proposed. "He has quite made up his mind to publish a Journal, and all that I could say to him in the way of tempting him to give a sheet or even more to the Magazine each month, and to receive a large sum for it [was unavailing]. This, he said, would not answer his purpose at all, but he will always be pleased to assist the Magazine, and he thinks the Journal will be of use in this way."

W. Blackwood to John Murray.

Dr Brewster entered very fully into the plan of his Journal; and from everything he said and showed me, I think he will make it a most interesting work. I pressed him to say what would be the terms he would expect as editor, and the rate of payment for contributions. He said this might be done in two ways—either by beginning with a small allowance, to be increased according to the sale, or starting at once with such an allowance both to the editor and contributors as would be proper to give, supposing the work successful: for the editor £100 for each number, and ten guineas a sheet.

These terms were not at all approved by Murray, and the negotiations seem to have speedily come to an end. I divine, though the resumption of these negotiations some years later makes the transaction a little perplexing, that Brewster, discouraged, took

his scheme to Constable, who became accordingly for some years the publisher of the 'Edinburgh Philosophical Journal,' a scientific magazine of high pretensions. After the 20th number, however (it was published quarterly), in the year 1824, Brewster came back to Princes Street with his scientific wares. That he came in great dissatisfaction with Constable was probably one reason of Blackwood's willingness to accept the venture, though without enthusiasm. He avows frankly that he undertook it with the hope "that I should have more frequent opportunities of urging upon him [Brewster] the necessity of pushing on the publication of the 'Edinburgh Encyclopædia,' which he had delayed and kept back in a way which was perfectly ruinous to all concerned." It was not like Mr Blackwood's usual sagacity to believe that a man who had so neglected one publication would be more diligent when he had two in hand. But the other hopes connected with the new Journal were equally fallacious. He was assured of a sale of 1250—and on this consideration agreed to pay the editor £100 or £115 for each number, besides paying ten guineas a sheet to the contributor. When, however, he found that the sale was not half what had been promised, and that, instead of the very moderate profit which he had been willing to content himself with, in consideration of other circumstances, he had bound himself to a regular and constant loss, the matter assumed a very different aspect. Dr Brewster, when appealed to, would neither release the publisher nor exert himself more diligently. He left Edinburgh calmly, like all the other people connected with the Uni-

versity, for six months in the year, and drove the printing-house frantic with incessant delays, by which both publications suffered. At last, after many warnings and entreaties, Brewster committed himself so far as to leave Blackwood a loophole by which to escape. The sixth number was not ready for the binders by the stipulated time. This, which would be to us a failure unspeakable, was in those days, when it was rather a feather in the cap of a man of genius to be irregular and unpunctual, no such extraordinary matter. During Gifford's reign over the 'Quarterly,' poor Mr Murray's life was made a burden to him by the exertions necessary to get the 'Review' out at anything like the appointed time, and on more than one occasion I believe a number dropped altogether, and there was a six months' instead of a three months' interval between the publications. Blackwood had not yet been trained into patience by the terrible discipline of driving a team of which John Wilson was a member. Nevertheless he says:—

> I most freely admit that in almost any other circumstances I should not have availed myself of this clear legal ground for putting an end to the agreement. But having appealed to Dr Brewster in every way, and shown that by the third article he was bound in honour and (as I still think) in law to grant us relief, I felt no hesitation on insisting strictly upon this very material article, seeing that he insisted on my fulfilling the stipulations in his favour to the very letter.

This matter was not concluded till the year 1826 or '27, and a few years later the 'Encyclopædia,' which was the property of a company of which Dr Brewster was the head, and Mr Blackwood one

of the members, after a great many involved and bewildering negotiations of a character similar to the above, was sold at a considerable loss to Messrs Tegg & Son in London. And even then this very troublesome chapter was not quite ended.

Mr Blackwood was also the publisher of Dr Chalmers's 'Evidences of Christianity,' a book the high popularity of which is proved by the fact that it was very shortly advertised as in a fifth edition; of a book of Sermons by Dr Andrew Thomson, the then very popular minister of St George's, Edinburgh; of Pinkerton's ill-natured but lively 'Inquiry into the History of Scotland'; a new edition of Nisbet's 'Scotch Heraldry,' and many more works of which it would be useless to give a detailed list. It is curious to find that, as the agent of Cadell and other London publishers, he was also partially the publisher of Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound,' and of Hazlitt's 'Table-talk,' notwithstanding the known hostility of the Magazine to the Cockney school. In 1821 the long series of publications by Galt began by the issue of 'The Ayrshire Legatees,' which had previously gone through the Magazine. 1822 and 1823 were very rich in light literature, bringing out, along with two or three more of Galt's works, Professor Wilson's 'Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life,' Lockhart's 'Adam Blair' and his 'Ancient Spanish Ballads.' In the former year was also produced 'Pen Owen,' a novel which forms a most romantic episode in Mr Blackwood's life, as well as, I think, in the history of fiction. By this time, partly by his own repeated visits to London, and partly also perhaps by the restless ministrations of Maginn, he had been brought into much closer relations with

the literary world of London, and, among many other writers and journalists, with Theodore Hook, who was closely connected with the 'John Bull' newspaper, a critic and journalist as well as novelist, supposed to be of importance in procuring good reviews, and generally very prominent in his generation.

It is possible that there are many of the present generation to whom the name of Theodore Hook conveys scarcely any information at all. But he was at that period a man of much note, amusing Society greatly, after the fashion of his time, with his gift of witty improvisation—not a common talent anywhere, and especially rare in England,—his witty and often impudent mystifications, his 'John Bull' and other periodical undertakings; not to speak of his novels, a series of clever, cynical, and somewhat vulgar stories, much read at the time but utterly dead as soon as their brief season was over. It was not 'Gilbert Gurney' nor the 'Sayings and Doings' which was offered to Mr Blackwood. Theodore Hook was a well-known name, and he had his own publishers, ready and eager to produce his work. The mysterious novel to which he called the notice of the Edinburgh publisher was by an entirely anonymous person, veiled in the deepest mystery, whose whereabouts, as well as his name, and every possibility of identification, were as carefully kept from Blackwood as from the public. This manner of raising interest would probably affect any mind but little to-day; but at that period every "unknown" was a possible Scott, and the veil of the anonymous enhanced even the poorest scribbler's claims to attention. And when there was added to this charm the mysterious intimation of a wonder-

ful discovery made by one who was in reality a very competent critic, and knew what he was about, and had it in his power to secure a hearing for any book, it is not wonderful if the literary enthusiasm of a man so truly devoted to books as was Mr Blackwood, and so completely sincere in his admiration of genius, should take fire at the prospect of inaugurating a new and great success and setting up a Great Unknown of his own. When the manuscript, confided to him under so many seals of secrecy, and with so many flourishings *sotto voce* of the literary trumpet, proved to be an interesting and attractive story, readily lending itself to all the prognostications of its godfather, Mr Blackwood's delight was unfeigned. The following is an admirable and attractive example at once of his character and of the most intimate private counsels of his house :—

W. Blackwood to Theodore Hook.

EDINBURGH, 28*th January* 1822.

I have taken a week longer than I promised to give my answer, and before making any apology for my delay, I must beg of you and of the author of 'Pen Owen' to believe that nothing ever gave me such heartfelt delight as I have received from being intrusted with such a work. It is in no "Mr Modely's" phrase I say this, but from the sincere and grateful feelings of my heart. If I had capital at my command, I would have at once in this letter enclosed a draft for the thousand pounds; but as it is, I send you one for the sum you require in the first instance—viz., five hundred pounds—and I have no hesitation in saying that when the work is ready for publication, I will send you the other five hundred as the remainder of the copy-money.

Now, my dear sir, having agreed to the terms you proposed, I hope the author will forgive me for saying a few words in regard to the second payment. My delight and admiration

have been so strongly excited by the work that I cannot for a moment doubt of its success. No human being has seen a line or heard a word of it except my wife, to whom I have read considerable portions, and from whose plain good sense and good feeling I find I can often best judge what will be the effect on the general reader. I am not ashamed to say that we both shed tears over many passages, and more particularly when I read the harrowing and powerful picture of the childless old Baronet, and when we reflected that no one but him who had lost an only child could so well describe the deprivation as well as point out the only consolation which can bear up the soul under such a terrible dispensation. Mrs B. has admired the work as much as I have done, and hopes there is little or no doubt of its great success; but with all the care of a good wife and the mother of eight children, she has told me that I am too like our hero Pen, always led away by the impulses of my own feelings and too sanguine temperament—that convinced as she is (both from what I have read to her and from what I have told her of my opinion from carefully perusing the whole work) that it is a book of the very highest class, yet she says, should I be mistaken, what a sad thing it would be for me, who am not rich, and cannot afford to spend my thousands like some of my more fortunate brother publishers. This matrimonial discussion will sound very odd to you, a bachelor, but I trust to your kindness and friendship, and hope you will excuse me for telling you frankly and freely all my views and feelings.

I very soon made up my mind that I would publish the book *coûte que coûte.* The plan I formed was to print 2000 copies in the same way as the 'Pirate,' supposing the volumes each to extend to 40 or 50 pages more. I calculated that if I should be able to sell off the impression, I should about clear off the copy-money and the expenses of paper, printing, advertising, &c., and trust to another edition for my profit.

I have already told you I wanted to say something about the second payment, but these details have carried me on without coming to the point. All I wish to say is (and sanguine as I am with regard to the success, I am almost ashamed to make the proposition), that if it suited the author's arrangements to make the second payment wait until I had sold, say, 1500 copies,

he would add much to the favour he has conferred upon me. This would also give me more breathing-time for the payment, which I need not tell you, in these times and engaged as my capital is, would to me be a matter of no small consequence. At the same time, I beg you would assure him that if from the arrangements he has made this delay would inconvenience him, I do not ask it. I am truly sensible that he wishes the speculation to be a useful and a profitable one to me, and I shall ever retain a deep sense of the honour he has done me, and the obligation you have conferred upon me in communicating it. Though it were not to put one shilling into my pocket, my gratification and feelings would be the same.

If I were to attempt to say anything about this very extraordinary work, I would scribble on more than you would either have patience to read or I am capable of expressing as I wish. All I shall say is, much as my expectations were roused by your letters, the work itself has far surpassed them. In my poor opinion, there is no work of our times which displays such an intimate knowledge of human nature as it really *is* in the various shades and grades of society. It is not one but every kind of picture of life which is given. Every page is rich with the outpourings of a master-mind, which leaves the impress of its own power upon everything it touches. Wit, humour, and pathos are equally at his command. The dialogues are the most spirited, characteristic, and dramatic, I think, that I have ever read. I do not regret the sleep it has deprived me of. I got the manuscript at the most inconvenient time of the whole year; for I had not got over the bustle of this season of annual bills and settlements: and then my Magazine hurry came on, which I only got rid of a few days ago. However, the first night I got it begun, I was so much interested that I had gone through the first and half of the second volume; by which time it was five o'clock in the morning, and I only got to bed for a couple of hours. In the midst of a number of pressing calls upon me, I have contrived to finish the second perusal, and with fresh delight.

But I must now say something about what is of more consequence, the getting the work quickly published. I should have been most happy to have employed Messrs Shackle &

Arrowsmith; but, in present circumstances, I agree with you that it would not be advisable it should come from their press. To save time, I wrote to Messrs A. & R. Spottiswoode, inquiring if they could undertake and print rapidly a novel of much about the same size as the 'Pirate.' I had their answer a few days ago, in which they say they could do 10 to 12 sheets a-week, or even more if necessary, if the proofs were regularly returned. Messrs Spottiswoode are the nephews and successors of Mr Hunter Blair, the King's Printer, and theirs is one of the most respectable houses in London. I hope the author can have no objection to them, as I would prefer them much to any other. Should this, therefore, be agreeable, the sooner they receive a portion of the MS. the better.

The author will not, of course, communicate himself with the printers, and perhaps you will not, but get a confidential person to transact everything you want. I have packed up and will despatch the precious box by this evening's mail. You will, therefore, receive it as soon as this letter. By the bye, if the author has no objection to the preservation of the MS., I would esteem it a very precious deposit were he to return it to me with the box when the printing is finished. I would feel proud, indeed, to have such a thing to leave with my eldest son.

We think it was Mrs Blackwood who was the more wise in this transaction, when, "as a good wife and the mother of eight children," she demurred to the despatch of the second £500 to follow the first before this anonymous book was even published. But the letter affords us a delightful glimpse, not only into a matrimonial discussion so full of mutual understanding, mutual judgment, and support, such as here takes place in the drawing-room at Salisbury Road, in the winter evening, in the quiet of the full and warm house after all the young ones were asleep under the shelter of the parent wings—in itself as pretty a picture as it would be easy to find; but also into

the mind, most prudent and sensible too, but full of the glowing enthusiasm and fervid impetuosity of the Scot. There are few publishers, we fear, nowadays, who would enclose £500, in a letter full of expressions as delightful as the notes, to the anonymous writer, who, with no recommendation but that of a *littérateur* like Theodore Hook, sent his manuscript out from the unknown. There is not now, perhaps, one person in a thousand, even of the literary classes, who has ever heard of 'Pen Owen,' which did not secure the immense success which Mr Blackwood believed in, but yet was more or less worthy of his excellent opinion of it, and did well enough, if not so well as he hoped. One hopes that he was not at least much out of pocket by it. Some controversies arose later about the second payment above discussed; and there was also considerable correspondence on the subject of a second book, called 'Percy Mallory,' which was received with less enthusiasm than the first—a coolness which, of course, struck the anonymous author as an injury, and arising from the publisher's caprice alone. These books were written by Dr Hook, Dean of Worcester, father of the better known and more distinguished Dr Hook, who was for so long Vicar of Leeds. Several years later we find a small packet of letters, clad in the deepest panoply of woe, black borders an inch deep, enclosing a little stream of words, in which Dr Hook's widow revealed the secret, and proposed to place a volume or two of her husband's "remains" in the hands of the publisher who had treated him so generously,—a proposal, however, that did not come to anything.

Besides the work of lighter productions, Mr Blackwood brought out for himself almost all the graver works which were specially Scotch. Irving's 'Life of George Buchanan,' which, up to a very recent period at least, was the best and most trustworthy, came with special appropriateness from the publisher who, as Hogg said, "cared for nothing that did not come under the beard of Geordie Buchanan." He was intrusted with Scott's 'Malachi Malagrowther,' and with the Celtic Dictionary of the Highland Society, whose productions generally were in his hands, while many scientific works on law, medicine, and theology figure in his lists; and there was never absent an ornamental fringe of much poetry, not as we think now of much importance, but largely appreciated then according to the taste and liking of that generation. One immense success was made by Pollok's 'Course of Time,' a poem in blank verse surveying the entire course of human history since Adam, which became immediately one of the most popular of books, passing through edition after edition until it reached that desirable phase of becoming a prize book for the diligent scholars of Sunday and other schools—than which nothing could be more advantageous, from a material point of view. The author was a poor young fellow who died of consumption, living only long enough to have the consciousness of having achieved fame. Dr Moir, already so often alluded to; Mr Thomas Aird, whose long tragic poem Professor Wilson wished to be published serially in the Magazine; Mrs Hemans, Miss Bowles, and many other poetical writers, with Wilson's 'Isle of Palms,' &c., and Hogg's 'Queen

Hynde,' and other poems, at the head, furnished a halo of fine sentiment and melodious verse for the establishment in Princes Street. At the same time a phalanx of serial publications issued from that source. The 'Journal of Science' already referred to, with which, as was Mr Blackwood's fate, another erratic person of genius played the same pranks as Wilson did with the Magazine, was balanced with a more solid periodical of quite another kind, the 'Quarterly Journal of Agriculture,' which was supported by the steady strength of Mr Henry Stephens, author of that 'Book of the Farm' which for a great many years was as a small but very sure landed estate to both author and publisher. Stephens was not, indeed, the editor, but a constant contributor, full of hints and suggestions, and there is a delightful sense of reality in these suggestions and grave preoccupations with subjects which we are inclined to smile at when considered from a literary point of view, which is as refreshing as the smell of the upturned earth or the clear shining after rain. Will Laidlaw's serious annoyance, almost distress, that the Ettrick Shepherd's admirable treatise on Sheep should not find a place in the Magazine, and the disappointment which Sir Walter shared that Laidlaw's own equally admirable system with grasslands should not have full exposition, give us an amused but entirely pleasant sense of the fragrant and solid soil under our feet, which neither Dr Brewster's vagaries, nor the kaleidoscope, nor any of the cogitations of the men of science, carry with them. The serious advice and anxiety of Stephens in the following letter has something of the same effect:—

H. Stephens to W. Blackwood.

19*th May* 1828.

There is a subject, which is closely connected with the nature of the 'Journal,' which is yet a desideratum, and the accomplishment of which would be a boon to agriculturists—namely, the publishing in the 'Journal' of accurate and well-finished engravings by the first artists of all the different breeds of cattle and sheep in Great Britain, from paintings of eminent men taken from living and choice animals, and from engravings already existing of well-authenticated likenesses. One of these given in each number would not only advance it, but the work itself would form a repository of exquisite models for study. Such a collection would be a valuable acquisition to a young agriculturist, who could thus acquire a knowledge of all the peculiar distinguishing points of all the different breeds—a knowledge which very few men have an opportunity of acquiring by inspection of living specimens. What does a Scotch farmer know of the Devons, the Herefords, and the Suffolks, or an Englishman of the Ayrshires, the Polls, or the West Highlanders?

Mr Stephens had at the same time an eye for art, and was not easily satisfied with the native painter suggested.

H. [he adds] is not the man for such a respectable production as I propose. I have seen several of his attempts—there is plenty of them in the Farmers Hall at Brechin; but he knows nothing of the points of an animal. His picture would no more give you an idea of the breed he intended to represent than the chalking upon the walls of Warren's blacking. Even were this projected work to be associated with the 'Journal,' H. should not be the painter while Ward and Landseer were in life.

If the Highland Society were truly patriotic, it would hang its hall with such masterpieces, Mr Stephens thought, and the work which reproduced these exquisite models would be unique. On a subject of similar interest and importance he sends a

long article — so long that it would occupy forty-eight pages of the 'Journal'—on the planting and management of thorn hedges :—

> A subject important in itself, but which has been but shabbily treated in books of husbandry. It is a long article, very long, perhaps too long, but as I had entered into the narrative of the subject, which I was obliged to do in order to accomplish the view I had taken of it, I determined to exhaust it at once, that no more need be said about it, and to construct a manual by which others might be guided in such operations. Certain it is, no such minute instructions on the subject can be found in any book at present extant.

This correspondence reminds us of a visit we once received from the author of some of the most delightful and racy novels of the period, whose life and work were closely connected, however, with the cultivation of the soil. Mr Blackmore talked of apple-trees in all their glory of blossom and fruit, of cherries and strawberries, and the big carts that travelled through the night to Covent Garden, and the new rose which he hoped to give to the world, till the little desert of the drawing-room began also to flourish and grow sweet. But after he had gone away, it occurred to my charming visitor that when two writers of fiction got together they ought perhaps to have talked of books, and he wrote a delightful note of apology for having thus transported the inhabitants of that little drawing-room into the fresh air and fragrance of the garden. The thorn-hedges, the grass-lands, even the "exquisite models" of the farmyard, have something of the same effect amid all this talk of literature. I have no doubt they were an immense refreshment to the simple-hearted publisher — a man who loved

the country and all natural things—amid the tribulations of the Magazine, the vagaries of Dr Brewster, the contradiction of sinners everywhere. They show something, too, of the multiplicity of the affairs and interests which centred in Princes Street, giving continual occupation to every possibility of thought. The 'Statistical Account of Scotland' issued from the same full and overflowing fountain, with a number of works upon the laws and constitutions of Scotland, and one periodical, the 'Law Journal,' or 'Journal of Jurisprudence,' in which constitutional subjects were treated. Macgregor's 'Sketch of British America' partook of something of the same character, as it contained an exhaustive account of the Canadian portion of the empire. But it is unnecessary to attempt a *catalogue raisonné*, or indeed even a summary of a catalogue, of Blackwood's publications.

Here is the first intimation of one of the most extensive historical works of recent times. Archibald Alison—son of the Rev. A. Alison, who was the incumbent of one of the Episcopalian churches in Edinburgh, and author of the well-known 'Essay on Taste' and other productions of the same kind—was then a young man in Edinburgh. He was, like so many more, an advocate, and had been drawn into the circle of Blackwood as soon as he began to feel the stirrings of literary life, and I find a list of things proposed to be done which shows that he was as versatile and facile in composition as the other props of the Magazine. The first of his letters in 1819 recounts how he had suddenly fallen upon a book "wrapt up in paper" and addressed to Mr Blackwood, which proved to be the first volume of Sharpe's edition of

the "British Poets," which ought to have been returned years before. The only thing he can do after his "unpardonable negligence" is to request Mr Blackwood to get for him the rest of the set, consisting of forty-two volumes, and to pay for them by "three or four letters on remote parts of Switzerland and the Grisons, which I visited last summer, and of which I have as yet seen no account in print." It was eleven years after this entry to the Magazine that Alison laid the following scheme before the publisher :—

A. Alison to W. Blackwood.

Nov. 15, 1830.

You will perceive from the enclosed papers that I have been engaged for some time past, during my leisure hours in vacation, in a considerable work—viz., a 'History of Europe, from the Commencement to the Termination of the French Revolution.'

Three chapters accompany this: one on the Reign of Terror, one on the death of Louis XVI., one on the Retreat from Moscow. You may examine them at your leisure, and put them into the hand of any friend whom you can trust and on whose honour you can rely, with a view to future publication, if you feel inclined to take the work. But I have no intention of publishing at this moment, nor until I obtain a more permanent situation at the Bar.

I send specimens of the work to you, both from former friendship and connections, and because the prevailing views in the work are the same as those supported in your Magazine. But my present object in sending you these papers is this. From my minute acquaintance, produced by writing this work, with the progress of the French Revolution, I think I am peculiarly qualified to write a series of Essays *comparing the first with the second Revolution*, and if agreeable to you I propose to write some such for your Magazine. The subject appears to me to be particularly at this moment of the highest importance, and I have never yet seen it fully or properly treated.

These essays seem to have grown into the publication in May 1833 of two large volumes, entitled 'The History of the French Revolution,' which, we are informed in the advertisements, is "complete in itself; but it will be followed by the history of the succeeding periods, so as to include the whole events of the war." Thus one of the most important publications of the generation was begun. Alison had published before this period several works upon legal subjects—'Principles of the Criminal Law of Scotland,' 'Treatise of the Criminal Law of Scotland,' &c. In the meantime he occupied himself very actively with Magazine work, as the following letter will show—the industry and method are exemplary :—

I have settled [he says] to send you for your next number in August—

1. An article on Reform.
2. A review of Salvandy's 'History of Poland.'
3. A review of Dr Christison's work [on poisons].

I will send you the Salvandy on *Tuesday morning*, July 12. The article on Reform on *Friday evening*, July 15th. Dr Christison's review on *Monday* or *Tuesday*, the 18th or 19th.

Three articles in a week! 'Maga' has many hard-working servants, with whose habits the present writer has some acquaintance; but upon this record we look with awe. It is true that the articles were often shorter than now, but there was no restriction on this point. Wilson repeatedly speaks of sending 32 pages; not unfrequently the dauntless publisher had to add an additional sheet or two to the ordinary bulk of the Magazine, and on several occasions (as has been already noted) resorted to the grand device of a

double number—a heroic expedient, which no other periodical, so far as we are aware, ever ventured on.

We have scarcely alluded to the numerous reprints from the Magazine, which occupy so much space in these advertising lists. The long series of Galt's works beginning in 1820 and spreading over many years, the series begun by the 'Ayrshire Legatees' and received with almost unfailing approbation by the public, was diversified by various publications—'The Omen,' 'The Spaewife,' &c.—which were historical or melodramatic, and did by no means secure equal favour. It is difficult to characterise the novels of Wilson,—'The Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life,' 'Margaret Lyndsay,' 'The Forresters,' &c.,—which are done in tints much too delicate to represent any real life that ever existed, and represent the romantic sentimentalism of the day rather than Scotland or country life or anything else in earth or heaven. They are never vulgar, as unfortunately so many books devoted to this tempting but dangerous subject have become, but they are absolutely moral without having either force or truth enough to be called visionary. Wilson himself is reported to have said in later life that he had read them over again and found them mawkish, which is as true a piece of criticism as he ever uttered—though very different, as the reader will recollect, from his feeling concerning them at the time. Lockhart's novels were of a very dissimilar description. I cannot venture to say that they would be popular now, when all our standards are so much changed, and Sir Walter Scott himself, standing as he does (if we may adopt these words in common use) like a great rock in a weary land, is exposed to so

many schoolboy insults; but they are books full of thought and substance, with many very powerful scenes. I, for one, retain an impression almost of awe from the early reading of 'Adam Blair,' though I have forgotten the story, and even the circumstances, of the scene which made this impression; and there is a ride for life before a rising tide in 'Reginald Dalton,' which is also one of those pictures that haunt the memory as if we ourselves in some episode of a wonderful dream had gone through the experience. These books, however, are so absolutely unlike anything we have now, that we can scarcely imagine what the verdict of the present generation, occupied with representations of human life so very different, would be of them. Lockhart's translation of 'Schlegel's Lectures,' which was his earliest work, his 'Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk,' an extremely popular and successful book, and his 'Ancient Spanish Ballads,' so full of poetic vigour and picturesqueness, were all published before 1825, when he left Edinburgh; and, as the reader will remember, he desired that Blackwood should publish a book which he had projected but never accomplished, even when he was established in the very shadow of Albemarle Street.

Another novel published by Mr Blackwood, 'Cyril Thornton,' by Captain Hamilton, comes under the same description, though there are scenes of broader humour in it, and a more distinctive nationality than anything attempted by Lockhart. Captain Hamilton, who was an occasional contributor to the Magazine in its early years, so distinctly recognised by Lockhart as one of the staff that he bids Mr Blackwood "Poke up Tom Hamilton," was not remarkable enough to

take any prominent place. But his books, 'Men and Manners in America' and a 'History of the Peninsular Campaign,' were both works of some importance.

The little history of 'Marriage' and 'The Inheritance' has been given in an early chapter. They were received by Blackwood with enthusiasm and an instant perception of their great merits: but this would seem to have faded under the experience of a limited or soon-exhausted popularity; and we find him congratulating himself at a later date upon not having taken Miss Ferrier's third work, 'Destiny,' which indeed was much inferior to its predecessors. This was one of the few instances in which he did not foresee the perennial character of books which were destined to become classics. There is an amusing discussion between Blackwood and Maginn on the subject of Miss Ferrier, in which the publisher comments with great indignation upon the indiscretion of that most indiscreet of writers in naming this lady in an article in a London paper. Such an invasion of a Scottish gentlewoman's privacy, and exposure of her individuality, was unpardonable in the opinion of Blackwood; while the Irishman thunders back, "What was there so peculiar in the pretensions of a lady whose merit was that she lived in Edinburgh, that no one must dare to name her name?" "She made fun of her own uncle in her books," adds this high-principled critic; "why then should she be so watched over and protected?" Fortunately posterity knows nothing about this exquisite crime, or who it was (many persons no doubt) of whom Miss Ferrier made fun.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS.

TWO VALUABLE RECRUITS—SAMUEL WARREN—"NOT ONE OF THE PRESS GANG"—SCOTT'S LETTER TO A YOUNG ASPIRANT—WARREN REPORTS HIS FAME "IN THE HIGHEST QUARTERS"—A SPOILT CHILD OF 'MAGA'—THE UNBLUSHING MAGINN—A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO DON THE ROBES OF CHRISTOPHER—THE AMERICAN MARKET FOR BOOKS—MICHAEL SCOTT—"CARRYING SAIL FEARLESSLY" WITH MR BLACKWOOD AT THE HELM.

THE new recruits of the Magazine who were added to the strength of the regiment in Mr Blackwood's last years were not many. But two at least whom we may pick out in the first place from the records of a very voluminous correspondence, and in the other from a few very careless and hurried letters, were after his own heart, producing the sensation he loved and stirring up again the endless discussions and public criticism which he was well aware were of so much importance to a periodical publication, as well as in both cases striking a new and exciting note among the harmonies and discords of current literature. The capital sea-stories, fresh, vivid, and ingenious, which even in the age of Marryat were second to none, of 'Tom Cringle,' and the even more striking Sketches, some of them full of genuine terror and pity, of the

'Diary of a Late Physician,' produced a startling and immediate effect, and gave to the ever-anxious editor the exhilarating consciousness that his Magazine continued to command the new blood and fresh talent which from the beginning he had been so determined to secure. These Sketches may not now have the same hold on the public, but they were very *new* at the period of their publication, and attracted a great deal of attention on account of their subjects and treatment, as well as much discussion and speculation as to their authorship and the truthfulness of their extraordinary delineations. Mr Warren has himself told, in the preface to his book, how the manuscript travelled from publisher to publisher and was returned by each, until he was almost in despair; but when at last, as the most forlorn of hopes, he sent it to Mr Blackwood, the answer was instant and favourable, and he found himself launched, without even the intimation of a proof, on that flowing tide of the Magazine which led to success and public recognition. He was but A. B. to the publisher who perceived his ability at once; though indeed A. B. had in fact as much meaning in those days as the actual name of the youth whose forcible imagination had conjured up so many striking and terrible scenes. He went on for six months in this disguise, but in the end of the year revealed himself in the following letter:—

Samuel Warren to W. Blackwood.

LONDON, *8th Dec.* 1830.

Your kind and confidential letter of the 31st calls for equal frankness and confidence on my part, and though perhaps it is hardly worth knowing, yet you may possibly feel some interest in ascertaining who the real Simon Pure is.

Do you happen to recollect an English student at Edinburgh University in the session 1827-28, who carried off several prizes: for the English poem in the Humanity Class, "The Martyr Patriot," of which the Professor printed 6 or 700; the Civil Law Prize, on the succession to property among the ancient Romans; and the prize for best Greek Scholarship in the Greek Class? That gentleman was one SAMUEL WARREN, now an Inner Templar of London, and who has had the distinguished honour of corresponding with Mr Blackwood and writing in his Magazine under the respective characters of A. B. and "A Physician." Will that do? or will it henceforth be the case with Mr Blackwood, as it always is with the thoughtless public, that he will undervalue the contributions of one who has at length disclosed a very unimportant name? If you choose to accept my services, I willingly, by these presents, enlist myself in the corps of Sir Christopher in quality of Physician to the Regiment! My best services, though probably not frequently tendered, for I am engaged in a most arduous and honourable profession, and have many anxieties and cares on my mind, shall always be at the command of Mr Blackwood. Though I am no novice at writing for the press, and know all the ins and outs of periodical literature, I shall always consider that my passport to literary popularity, if I should ever attain it, was obtained from Mr Blackwood. Rely upon it, your Physician will not act the part of a Renegade Subaltern,[1] or Skipper, or Standard-bearer. I admire the principles and talent of your Magazine, and have for years, and am very proud to be allowed to put a little stone or two in such a glorious monument of British Literature as 'Blackwood's Magazine.' I am not one of the Press Gang, and thank God that I have no occasion to write myself into a mere *hack* for any man. My circumstances are prospering beyond my most sanguine expectations, and I shall therefore never write, either for you or any other independent publisher, in any other spirit than that which you very spiritedly and judiciously point out when

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[1] In allusion, I suppose, to Gleig, Galt, and Maginn, who had all at different times appeared under other flags—an allusion not perhaps in very good taste.

saying, "What I have always been anxious for is that able men should write upon such subjects as they themselves feel an interest in." I shall therefore continue the 'Passages' for about 4 or 5 chapters more, and when they are concluded perhaps your pages would be open to some occasional contributions on subjects in which "I feel an interest."

I am distressed that you should imagine that I mentioned the large sums proffered by 'Fraser' with a sponging intention. I beg you will be assured that I did not, and that I was sincere when I said (and am still of the same mind) that I would rather write for Blackwood's fifteen pounds what 'Fraser' or others would give me fifty pounds for. I feel a real interest in 'Maga,' and what my very little and limited efforts may add to your support shall always be yours. "The Man about Town" is exciting a sensation among the Clubs, and elsewhere. "Horrible," "ghastly," "frightful," "lamentable," are some of the expressions to which I have listened. Campbell the other day in a large party (I think the Earl of Winchester [?] was there) said of my 'Passages' (of course not knowing who wrote them), "They have been very successful indeed." Some one asked him what he thought of them. He replied to this effect: "Though I think that here and there is an attempt at *fine writing*, these papers are unquestionably the production of a man of great powers, and exhibit many glimpses of *first-rate excellence*." Don't let this go further, please. They are quite the talk of the medical profession, and I have often laughed heartily at the angry discussions to which I have listened on this subject of the authorship and reality.

Nothing can be more characteristic of the man than this letter, with its mixture of sincerity, bombast, and self-esteem, and the artless account of the fine things which have been said about himself, which he continues through many letters to recount with great naïveté to the sympathetic publisher. He became a warm friend as well as a most successful contributor to the Magazine for many years; and

the very striking 'Diary of a Late Physician,' who was identified with one famous doctor after another by the guesses of the Press, to the great delight of the author and publisher, was followed by the not less popular romance of 'Ten Thousand a Year,' which attracted a great deal of attention, and combined caricature with sentiment, the ridiculous with the exalted, in a manner which delighted the public: but this not in the lifetime of Mr Blackwood, whose new recruit was doubly pleasant to him on account of his youth.

Attention has been lately called to a letter published, I think, by his son, the Rev. Edward Warren, in New York, from Sir Walter Scott, which shows that, though only twenty-three at the time when his connection with Blackwood began, Warren had been planning literary work from a still earlier age, and had written for advice, as so many young men do, to the highest name in literature. Sir Walter, always kind, though perhaps with less than his usual graciousness, and disclaiming summarily the title of Author of the Waverley Novels which his young and unknown correspondent gave him, yet tendered the best of advice to the aspirant. He himself "could not be useful to" the young man in the way suggested. He adds, however, the simplest and most judicious of wise counsels:—

Sir Walter Scott to S. Warren.

Indeed, if you will take my advice, you will take no other person's judgment or countenance on the project of publishing which you entertain than that of an intelligent bookseller who is in a good line in the Trade. Although no great readers, nor pretending to particular taste, these gentlemen, whose profession

it is to cater for the public, acquire much more accurate knowledge of what will give satisfaction to the general reader than can be obtained by a man of letters in his closet. They have also ready access to good judges, and their own interest peremptorily commands them to give as much encouragement as possible to genius, or anything approaching it.

It had not, as has been seen, proved an easy task to Warren to find the intelligent bookseller thus forcibly recommended to him; but he had succeeded at last. He continued to send Mr Blackwood, to whom (though he may have smiled) they were always welcome, reports — very often "from the highest quarters"—of the extreme success of the Physician's articles, sending the bad with the good, he says; but the critics were generally unanimous. An objection like the following rather adds to than detracts from the general enthusiasm of approbation:—

S. Warren to W. Blackwood.

I have seen a letter to a friend from a very gifted person; and something, moreover, of a saint. "Have you read the Papers in some of the late Blackwoods about a Physician? I have, and with wonder at the prodigious talents and *folly* of the writer. This I say for two reasons: that one of his astonishing command of language and power of thought and knowledge of character should think it necessary to resort to such contemptible expletives or oaths. They are motes, however, in a perfect sunbeam of splendid talent."

Many other testimonies follow, all of the same enthusiastic kind:—

One of the most eminent hospital surgeons in London was called in on Saturday night to consult on my case; and he happened to see lying on my desk in my sitting-room a MS. heading of Passages from the 'Diary,' &c., chapter viii. "Why, good God," said he, "are *you* the writer of these remarkable

papers?" I was taken so by surprise that I acknowledged it. "Well," he cried, "I hear of them among my patients wherever I go, and I have been asked a thousand times by whom they were written, and always gave the credit of them to Dr Paris!!!" He said that "The Man about Town" was one of the boldest and most affecting pictures of the miseries of vice he had ever seen in his life, and had produced an "immense" sensation among the clubs. "Do you think that my facts are overcharged or exaggerated?" I asked. "No! I have a patient under my care at this moment beyond all chance of recovery, whose condition is even more horrible and revolting than that you describe." He says he hears everywhere that they are likely to be published separately, and that *you'll* make a fortune by them. "'Tis a thousand pities you are not in our profession," said he; "what a business your papers would have brought you!"

The reader will derive from these letters the whimsical conclusion that every branch of society in the early thirties, when there was in fact a great deal to think about, was discussing the 'Diary of a Late Physician'—and no doubt in a certain sense it was true: for certainly if anything was ever written which could startle and horrify the imagination, and create in it an alarmed expectation of revelations to come, it was the paper called "The Man about Town," herein discussed, which for sheer horror exceeded anything that had been written, at least let us say since 'Frankenstein.' It is very possible it may have been a salutary revelation: there is no doubt it was a very dreadful one.

Warren, however, was not always in this triumphant mood. It was not very long before he discovered, like most of his co-contributors, that the enthusiastic and genial publisher was at the same time a keen critic. Not more than a year after he "joined," we

find a letter full of astonishment and dismay at the rejection—was it possible?—of an article on some general subject not mentioned.

I am dreadfully depressed [cries this spoilt child of 'Maga'], and if this paper is rejected I shall be too disheartened to send any more. So pray put one line in the post saying "IT WILL DO," and I will pay three times the postage-money. DO! consider I am ill, and in a low state. I have done my best, and sat writing to finish this when the surgical folk thought me in bed. I shall expect ONE line ONLY with the utmost anxiety. Don't write and in effect tell me the "spirit has left me." Towards the close—that is, the last 20 pages—there are some of the best things I ever wrote. DO toil through it, and just say "It will do."

A contributor so emotional could scarcely fail to conciliate the sternest soul, and Mr Blackwood was not stern save under the strongest provocation. The following letter, however, written after some years of acquaintance with all the moods of a writer who appealed so tenderly for favour and indulgence, shows how with his usual good sense and vigour the publisher held his ground. It is unnecessary to inquire what the article was, and I cannot find the letter from Warren, whether of fierce resentment or tender expostulation, to which it is a reply.

W. Blackwood to S. Warren.

26th April 1834.

You will now be in a much calmer mood to judge of the propriety of the omissions I made in your last article than you were when you wrote me on the 29th ult. I return you the MS. for this purpose, and if you will divest yourself of the parental feeling, I am sure you will agree with me that there is neither fact nor argument lost by what is left out. This is still my own opinion, and it was most decidedly Professor Wilson's.

While I must always exercise my own judgment upon any articles which are sent me, surely you have no reason from your past experience to be in any dread that I will use a mangling hand to anything of yours. With regard to this article of yours, it gave me great pain to leave out any part of it, and had I not been most truly convinced of the propriety of what I did, I could not have omitted one line, though it was much longer than was convenient for the No., and it obliged me to leave out a short one of Professor Wilson's. As an instance of what I have sometimes to do to my most esteemed and valued friends, I may mention to you that the first article in No. 222, "Attacks on the Church," was upwards of 20 pages when sent me; and without asking my friend's leave, who is at hand, I cut it down, as you see, to a dozen of pages.

I hope you have had leisure to get on with your new chapter, as I shall be happy if you can send it by Cadell's parcel of the 8th. As I mentioned, however, before, I do not wish you to harass or hurry yourself, but to print to your own mind, and at your leisure. I hope, too, you will keep in mind the necessity of compression. I am obliged to urge this on all my friends. I know well how difficult it is, and I never write to stint you, but merely to put you on your guard.

Notwithstanding these little encounters, the warm feeling of friendship, even of attachment, between the two men lasted unbroken till the end of Blackwood's life—then, alas! nearly approaching—and was continued almost unbroken, through that of his sons, until Warren too, full of years, was withdrawn from the scene. It was still, however, in its first freshness when, a bridegroom and in the highest spirits, Warren wrote from the seaside where he was spending his honeymoon, to the friend whom as yet he had not seen.

S. Warren to W. Blackwood.

I beg to return you my affectionate thanks for your very kind letter and its remittance. I shall ever feel gratified for

the warm expressions of personal regard which were contained in your last letter, and hope that the friendship which on my part has been so auspiciously commenced may continue. Rely on it, my dear sir, I can never forget that it was Mr Blackwood who brought me before the public, and by the splendour of his own introduction insured me a successful reception. I am proud and happy to think that my papers have—if I am rightly informed—at all enlarged the sale of your Magazine: and I wish I could do more than say that my *best* services are at your command for the future; for I am now, thank God, free from many, if not all, of the cankering cares which ate away my peace of mind in former days. I have married a most amiable and affectionate wife, am comfortably and even elegantly settled in life, and in short am myself again.

I have had numerous applications from the editors of Magazines, Annuals, &c., to write for them, but have declined them. One of them offered me thirty guineas to give him leave to add "By the author of 'Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician,'" and said that if I would not let him put that title he would still give me £15. One of the *literati* whom I met at dinner, a man from whom I should have expected better things, prefaced his application to me by speaking in the most shameful way of both you and Wilson. You would be astonished to know his name! He said, "Mr Blackwood will help you and treat you civilly as long as it suits his purpose, but when he has done with you he will neglect you and treat you ill!!! *Crede experto,*" said he. "Now, Mr Warren, in *our* Magazine, &c., &c., &c.!!!" I have declined to have anything to say or do with him.

This personage was no doubt the ubiquitous and unblushing Maginn, whose rupture with the Magazine had for some time been complete, and who was exerting all his shifty and wayward energies in building up 'Fraser's Magazine' upon those same insecure and moving sands which Blackwood had only by enormous stress of genius and good luck found a footing upon. Warren, however, for one, was anxious to make his

absolute superiority to all temptation manifest. Yet it would not seem that he was ever successful in his cultivation of general literary subjects. On one occasion he appears to have fallen into the snare which caught the unwary feet of many new contributors, and attempted to put on the robes of Christopher. Ten years before, all the brethren had worn these robes with absolute freedom, but now that the members of that united band were dispersed, it was woe to the new man who touched the crutch, or attempted to copy the accent, of the one immovable head of the forces of the Magazine. Warren, like others, after his buoyant elation and sense of importance, had to lower his pretensions. He expresses himself as "much mortified at having failed," though grateful for the manner in which this had been intimated to him. "Nothing," he assures Mr Blackwood, "could have been more remote from my intentions than to give either of you offence in assuming a tone of familiarity and the character of a contributor."

I had no wish to force myself into your *caste*, so to speak: but I erred in the simplicity of my heart fancying, erroneously it seems, that I could make my communication the more acceptable. I sincerely beg pardon, and will never offend in like manner again. North and I must be like a private and a field-marshal. Pray offer my apologies to the Professor, whose unapproachable altitude I can never contemplate but with feelings of awe and hopeless admiration.

But is my paper altogether worthless? Can I not divest it of its offensive dress, remould it, draw more freely on my fancy, and send it to you again? Surely there are interesting incidents in it, and if told in my own manner, and added to and embellished, would still do for you? There are many things I

should omit, many I should add, and much I should alter. What do you say? Shall I try? I will take more pains with it and make it, I hope yet, "worthy of the physician."

The amiable vanity of a man who took a reproof in this manner must, we cannot but feel, have been only skin-deep. The following outburst of applause was no doubt called forth by a famous speech, elsewhere recorded, made by Wilson at one of the meetings against the Reform Bill held in Edinburgh:—

S. Warren to W. Blackwood.

What a splendid hit the Professor has made! I hear his praises everywhere, and in a large company where were several M.P.'s Wilson was called the *Tory Samson.* I hope he will bow down the mighty pillars of revolution, and, unlike his prototype, escape himself from the crushing ruin. The speech is full of noble sentiments, couched in such language as would make some of our great old English writers nod to him from their very graves. The allusion to the gorgeous guzzler on the throne was finely conceived and grandly executed. Practically the effect of the speech on me has been to strengthen the tone of my own political feelings and make me more proud of my principles and determined to maintain them. Why does not the man come into the House of Commons and shake some of the dry bones in that valley of Ezekiel? In times of danger the great should elbow their way to the oar.

The publication in the Magazine, often with considerable intervals, of the 'Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician' went on during all the remainder of Mr Blackwood's life, and for several years after his sons assumed the direction of the Magazine, one series of them having been reprinted as a separate volume. And there is a continuous stream of letters full of the

writer's very distinct personality, his own warm appreciation of his work, yet, on the whole, wonderfully tolerant reception of criticism. A slight discussion occurred about the publication in a London magazine of a story called the "Waggoner," which Blackwood, to the deep wounding of the author's susceptible heart, had rejected. Warren had a perfect right to dispose of this as he pleased; but he surrounded it with a web of precautions, exacting a promise that his name should not even be disclosed to the publisher, but remain locked in Campbell's bosom, who was the editor of the magazine. This promise was broken, however, and Warren's distress and annoyance may be conceived when the author of the 'Passages' was thus made to appear in a rival publication as if he had abandoned or been abandoned by his literary godfather and friend. His exposition of his wrath and despair, and the objurgations addressed by him to those "betrayers" who had put him in so false a position, are most characteristic—a despair and rage which receive a comic touch when he notes that for the communication (the same people having offered him any price for a signed contribution) he received only the ignoble sum of seven and a half guineas!

The literary market over the seas in America was scarcely thought of in these days, when the pirates pirated freely, and authors were so surprised and gratified by any acknowledgment from across the Atlantic that they had scarcely awakened to the idea of having any right in the matter. That there were already some possibilities of remuneration, however,

from that quarter, is apparent from the following note; though why Warren should have declined them "of course" is a mystery beyond our explanation:—

I have had several offers from American publishers to forward them duplicates of my future communications, if any, for 'Maga,' on terms similar to those offered to Sir Walter Scott. I have declined all such, of course. Would you believe it, I have by me one of my papers translated into the native Cherokee language! It is in great initial letters, appearing like the old Greek characters. What next?

We may have much to say of Warren afterwards, during the time of the two brothers, who mournfully succeeded to their father's responsibilities, and fortunately also to his friends, at so early a period. But we may here conclude the record of his connection with the first guide and head of the Magazine with the following words, so full of the real and genuine feeling which is above criticism:—

S. Warren to Robert Blackwood.

I had but just returned from Hastings, and found your letter on my table. I had already found in the columns of a newspaper the sad and surprising intelligence of your father's death. I can truly say that it unnerved me for several days: for the shock was equally severe and unexpected. I have lost in your admirable father my earliest, my most faithful and affectionate and discreet friend. My heart swells when I reflect upon what he has been to me, what he has done for me. Words but sicken you, smarting under so heavy a blow, and would not relieve me. The mourning I wear externally for your dear father is the faithful type of a sorrowing heart—a heart in which his memory will long be cherished. May my right hand forget its cunning before I forget him! I protest that your father's image never comes before me but my eyes are half dimmed with tears.

The other contributor whose writings brought a fresh and joyous spring of new life in an unaccustomed channel into the Magazine was the young naval officer who, both in his stirring fiction and in his letters, was a complete type of the dashing and dare-devil seaman familiar to the imagination of these times, Tom Cringle —in the world and among ordinary men Michael Scott. He appeared in the Magazine in two works, 'Tom Cringle's Log' and the 'Cruise of the Midge,' full of spirit and humour and the genuine breath of the sea, but had a very brief literary existence, disappearing after these productions without further sign. His letters are full chiefly of revisions and corrections of detached portions of his stories as he sent them, and he seems to have made his publisher in many cases the medium of these corrections, denoting how a line is to be changed at the foot of page 30, or a new reading substituted for the end of a chapter, with a delightful indifference to the fact that he was writing to a man much more closely occupied than himself, and whose business it certainly was not to correct proofs. "I never would have ventured to bother you thus: but you see you have spoilt me, old man," the careless sailor writes. Even the manuscript itself he seems to have sent in the most chaotic state, describing how he has "spun the within" (that is, written the enclosed) when on a visit, composing it "by fits and starts as I could steal time: but the pain of copying it out fair —I am such a bad penman—is too much for me to face." Thereupon he beseeches Mr Blackwood "to select out of your pandemonium some Champollion of a devil, skilful and patient enough to decypher my

hieroglyphics." "Get some one," he adds, "to correct my French faults—I say, see that when the natives or me [*sic*] speak French that it be gramatical [*sic*]: as for Bang's, let it stand as *I* write it." The confidence which this reckless young writer feels in the man who had at once divined his merit and superintended his work is touchingly and simply expressed.

Tom Cringle to W. Blackwood.

Now, my dear sir, make some one write particularly how you come on. I am more distressed than I can tell you at your continued indisposition. When you were well, and at the helm, I used to carry sail fearlessly, for I knew you would always keep me in the right course.

Very few have been the editors, still fewer the publishers, thus addressed; and nothing could be more true than the benefits to which this simple acknowledgment bears witness.

CHAPTER XIV.

DOMESTIC LIFE.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF FAMILY NOMENCLATURE—MISS ISABELLA BLACKWOOD—REMOVAL OF ALEXANDER BLACKWOOD TO LONDON—THE DEFECTION OF LOCKHART—THE BLUE BAG—THE CRASH OF CONSTABLE—A HOLIDAY IN PARIS—A LONG PARTING—LETTERS FROM MR BLACKWOOD TO HIS SON IN INDIA—A LIVELY HOUSEHOLD—PROSPERITY OF 'MAGA'—PURCHASE OF 45 GEORGE STREET—OPENING OF THE HIGH SCHOOL—FAILING HEALTH.

Mr Blackwood married, as has been seen, at the age of twenty-eight, in the year 1805, and shortly after settled in the comfortable roomy house in Salisbury Road, Newington, where all his children, nine in number, were born. Seven of them were sons—a fact which gave much reality to Mrs Blackwood's remark upon Hogg's prodigality in giving two Christian names to his newly born child. The Shepherd would feel the inappropriateness of such extravagance, she said, if, like herself, he "ran out of laddies' names." In those days the fancy names which are so popular nowadays, bestowed for euphony's sake, or the sentiment of a youthful mother in favour of a romantic name, were unknown, and the argument "none of your kindred are called by this name" applied as strongly in Scottish families as in those

of India. The young Blackwoods were Alexander, Robert, William, James, Thomas, John, and Archibald, in strictest adherence to these natural lines; while the two girls—the one the favoured and admired elder daughter, whose movements are chronicled in all the early domestic letters, a sort of princess among her brethren, the other the pet and amusement of the household—were Isabella and Janet. The last of the family, survivor of all these sturdy boys and of all the happiness of the large and genial family circle, still lives in old age,[1] kindling yet at the recollections of the past, so full of famous names and exciting memories, with the unfailing sense of the humorous which belonged to all her family, and many a vivid remembrance of scenes and *bon-mots* long faded from other minds. She affords a most remarkable instance of the fond and glowing recollection of youth, which is so often to be met with among those who have not themselves taken any bustling part in ordinary life, to whom all that is best and most brilliant seems to be summed up in those early years. Few perhaps, however, have so much reason as Miss Blackwood for this feeling, and her reminiscences give always the most genial picture of the lively household—Papa, who was the centre of all life and brightness, thinking of nothing but how best to indulge and please the tastes of his children; while the graver mother sat presiding behind with many a shaft of caustic wit and sharp dart of criticism upon father and children alike, and received by both alike with that droll perception of

[1] At the time this was written Miss Isabella Blackwood was alive. See vol. i. p. 20.

the conscious exaggeration in them which makes the bark, which was always worse than the bite, so clearly apprehended and understood. The notable persons who came and went: the big Professor, with yellow locks and coat-tails flying in the wind; the poetess, with bare shoulders and scarf and ringlets in the fashion of the time; the droll creatures called authors, upon whom Mrs Blackwood looked with contempt, and Papa almost worshipped at first, though coming round to the other estimate in many cases; the political gentlemen, with their whiff of London and high life, who appeared from time to time,—all these details fill up the picture which it was long a just and pleasant plan to communicate, under the title of Miss Blackwood's Reminiscences, to the world. They would have been most amusing Reminiscences, more interesting than a great part of those with which this generation has been entertained and wearied; but except in so far as they lighten up here and there half a page of this book, the public will never hear of them. The young hand that was to have writ them is withdrawn from all human activities, and age is closing over the lively eyes that sixty years ago saw so many humorous scenes.

It is when the boys were beginning to go forth from the populous and cheerful house, and letters from and to them bring the whole into clear revelation for a time, that Blackwood's happy domestic life is made visible. Alexander, the eldest son, and William, the third, were launched at almost the same time upon the world—the elder in London, where he was sent to make himself acquainted with all the minutiæ of "the Trade"; the younger in India,

where his father's anxious and loving letters followed him, full of affection and good sense, fatherly tenderness and advice. Alexander's absence was not of very long duration; but his letters are interesting, and full of an affectionate boy's thoughts of his family and close detail of his own life as a unit in London, that the father and mother might know everything he was doing. He was nineteen, but already knew a great deal about business, and entered into it with evident relish and ability. It is curious to find that though Blackwood was at the head of the Trade in Scotland, already well off and prosperous, as well as famous through the Magazine, and penetrating into many circles, both political and literary, which were closed to the correspondents with whom, on the other hand, he always kept up a lively intercourse, he should have thought it right to put his son through all the drudgery of a London publisher's office, in order to qualify him for his work at home. The work assigned to young Alexander was that of "collecting," which means, I understand, the transmission of orders for books to the various firms, including the purchase and even postage of the same—a troublesome occupation, which does not seem very advantageous to the future head of a business so much engaged with literature proper as that of Blackwood. However, both father and son appear to have been satisfied that this was the right thing to do, and that the youth had thus opportunities of both seeing and hearing a great deal that would be of after advantage to him. But before setting out for London, Alexander had begun to be the trusted deputy of his father during

his occasional absences, and there are long letters to him full of business details, which show how entirely he was already in possession of that confidence, and of all the affairs of the house. Here—added to the letter of business directions during one of those absences—is a pretty letter from Mr Blackwood to Robert the second son, which shows, more than anything that could be said, the kind father's mind. Alexander had sent the usual bulletin of all that was going on in Edinburgh to the Somerset Hotel in the Strand, where Mr Blackwood always had his quarters, and the younger boy, already at the office also, had added his contribution.

W. Blackwood to Robert Blackwood.

LONDON, 20*th June* 1825.

I am glad you have written to me as well as Alexander, for you can have no idea how very precious a letter from any of you is to me in a place like this. I am very sorry to hear you have a cold. . . . Tell the dear little doctor [the youngest son, Archie] that he must take care of you, and papa will not forget him. I have no thought that can be separated from either of you, and I anxiously hope you have this feeling to each other, and are going on as happily as I could wish.

"Tell my little Johnnie," he adds, "to cheer up and get rid of" some childish ailment. Great London with all its excitements was "a place like this," in which the best refreshment was a boyish letter, and the active man of business counted the days till he could get back to his home. Some one, who was an inhabitant of that desert of town, reported humorously that having gone to the Somerset, where Mr Blackwood himself was laid up with a cold, he found the famous editor and publisher "greetin' for his wife."

Later in this year, 1825, in October, Blackwood took his elder son to London, where he was placed, as has been said, in the office of Messrs Baldwin & Cradock as a "collector." To settle him in suitable lodgings was a still greater responsibility; but this was simplified by the offer of Mr Archibald Hastie, a relation of his mother, and afterwards M.P. for Paisley, to take him in. The youth was at once comfortably established in a luxurious home, with the advantages or disadvantages of living in a rich bachelor's house, and joining now and then the dinner-parties of his elder friends. Neither Mr Blackwood nor his wife, however, seems to have had any difficulty about this. What somewhat embarrassed them was, that to pay for their boy's board in these exceptional circumstances was impossible. Mrs Blackwood, who addresses her husband as "my dear Blackwood," and signs herself "yours truly," so that the bewildered reader of the letters searches about for some undiscovered male relative whose composition these rare epistles might be supposed to be, expresses herself as much pleased with the arrangement. "It is kind and friendly in him [Mr Hastie], and I trust Alexander will be sensible of the kindness shown him and benefit from Mr Hastie's conversation," this lady says. ". . . Willie looks with an anxious face when your letters arrive." For Willie was waiting to hear when he was to start with his cadetship for India and face the world, not knowing even in what regiment, much less in what corner of the great Indian empire, his lot was to be cast. When the letters came in, little Janet and Archie, too clamorous to allow them to be read in peace, had to be "discharged"; "but Willie and I

had such work to read it. Bob was at Mr Waugh's sale, and Elizabeth was out at tea. I laught and said, like Charlie Harvie, we would have to go to bed and think on it." Willie's time did not come till a year later. It was a bookseller's sale at which Bob was, and of which on the other side of the paper he gave his father an account. He was still somewhat boyish, but quite business-like, the eldest son now at home and talking of the Magazine as one to the manner born.

It was in the end of the year 1825 that Alexander Blackwood was left in London by himself to begin his life. The reference to the newspaper with which the first letter begins will be blank to the reader of to-day; but in those days much use was made of these cheaper modes of communication. The newspaper was a signal of safe arrival.

Alexander Blackwood to W. Blackwood.

7th Nov. 1825.

I got Bob's newspaper on Saturday evening, which told me you had arrived safe, and all quite well. I have been pretty busy since I wrote to you on Friday, and to-morrow I go out by myself with the blue bag on my shoulder. I am to collect in the East division for a month or two, as the West is much larger, and also requires a greater knowledge of the town. To-day I have been walking about a good deal, and have just returned from Baldwin's (½-past 8) pretty much tired. Mr Joy says that eight o'clock is the soonest I can leave the warehouse, and I feel rather sorry at this, because I cannot get time to call upon anybody at that hour.

I am quite sorry I have not been able to see Dr Maginn since you went away. I have always been kept too late, or had to go to Galt's with proofs, when I could have called upon him. I had quite made up my mind to have spent Sunday evening with him; but Mrs Hughes took me to drink tea with Mr

Twining, a particular friend of the Dr's, and we did not get away till half-past ten, when it was too late to call for Dr M. Mr Twining is a banker in the city, who had a very nice family —one a lad about my own age, with whom I got quite intimate in the course of the evening—and both Mr and Mrs Twining said they should be most happy to see me any Sunday evening I had leisure to call. Mrs Hughes says I must be sure to call, as they will be happy to see me; and I think I shall.

Mrs Hughes told me yesterday that Willie cannot get his appointment this year, as it cannot be made out till he is sixteen; but as soon after his birthday as he pleases, Mr Wynn will get the appointment. This is a sad pity; but Mrs Hughes says it cannot be helped, and that Willie must work the harder,—this, of course, will not prevent his going out with Mr Hastie. Tell him that I hope he is finding the Hindostanee very easy, and as he is an idle sort of person, I expect to have all the news of the family from him. My aunt must also be a regular correspondent, and Bob and you together must tell me all that is going on in the shop.

I enclose you all that I have got from Mr Galt of the 'Omen.' It is certainly very beautiful, but still there is something wanting about it.

The father's first letter after leaving home gives the son both pain and pleasure. "I was glad," he says, "that you were quite well, and thinking so much about me; but I can't say I have been very much distressed to hear that Mr Lockhart is to be the new editor of the 'Quarterly.' He must draw some of your friends over; otherwise," continues the young man, with natural partisanship, "you need not much regret his loss, as for the last twelvemonth he has been writing very little for the Magazine, and in this last year you well know the Magazine has both increased in circulation and obtained a very different character for respectability than it ever had before." He adds:—

I am very happy to hear that the Professor is in such good

spirits, and I hope he will do a great many first-rate articles this season. Impress upon him how necessary it is for him to exert himself, as Mr Lockhart's leaving you will be eagerly caught hold of by all your enemies as a sign that the Magazine is not doing. I will not let Maginn rest night or day, I assure you, as it will be of such prodigious consequence for the Magazine to keep up this year—as, should it sink in the least now, it will never get up again. I must conclude this letter, as it is written in Baldwin's, and if Joy were to catch me at anything of this kind just now, he would pull my ears off.

It will be seen how excellent and zealous a counsellor and backer-up Mr Blackwood was so fortunate as to have in this boy of nineteen.

A few days later the young man gives some further particulars of his new occupation, which must have been an extraordinary change for him after the freedom and ease of his life at home. It is noticeable, however, that there is not a grumble, not a word of complaint. He has apparently none of the uneasy pride which might have been natural enough to the young head of an establishment much more in the eye of the world than Baldwin's, thus suddenly reduced to the humble position of a clerk and collector. This point of view does not seem even to have struck his steady youthful mind. He goes as cheerfully about with "his blue bag on his shoulder" as if he had worn the gown at Oxford or Cambridge. We have been accustomed to have such an apprenticeship moaned over in every note of the gamut; but this was not the mood of the manly youth, who accepted it as a natural probation without a word to imply that the training was hard. In his next letter he congratulates himself that he has got home at seven o'clock, and is able to sit down "to write as much

and to as many of you as I can before 9 o'clock, at which hour I go to Mr Galt's with proofs."

10th Nov. 1825.

Since you left I have been pretty busily employed at Baldwin's, and I think I shall get on pretty well. For the last two days I have been collecting alone, but have never had what they call a very long list, so that I have not got a fair trial of that yet. However, they tell me I shall never have such hard work while I only collect in the East department, as the distances are so much shorter than the West, and I am likely to continue in the East for three months. The greatest difficulty I find yet is the looking out the orders in the morning, as there are so many different alphabets to look through, and none of them are arranged in the best order; indeed there is a great danger of confusion in the whole warehouse. I am afraid I shan't like any of the partners much; it is quite impossible to get a civil word from any of them. Joy has never had occasion to find fault with me yet; but I am told he is constantly finding fault, and never expresses the least satisfaction with anything you do. Baldwin never interferes in our department, and Cradock is a mere cypher. The clerks are all very kind, although there are one or two surly rascals among them. On the whole, I may say that I am liking B.'s very well. I am, of course, as comfortable as can be at Mr Hastie's.

I breakfasted with Galt this morning, and of course gave him your message about Mrs Galt: as I expected, he seemed no way interested about the matter. He told me he knew about Lockhart: that he was to be the new editor of the 'Quarterly,' and thinks it will do the Magazine no harm. He did not say who had told him, but that point I will ascertain to-night. I cannot get this subject out of my mind at all, it appears so odd, and I am afraid you will find it very inconvenient having nobody at your hand whom you can consult about occasional matters, as the Professor is so unsteady, and only five months in town; but I believe you will soon get accustomed to it, and the only thing I fear is his getting your contributors over. The Doctor [Maginn], I am afraid, will be his principal man: there is no danger of Robinson writing

for the 'Quarterly,' and you can keep fast hold of the Professor. You know I always take a black view of everything, and I have no doubt I am doing so at present, but I have just written what occurs to me.

The result of giving the Doctor no rest "night or day" was apparently successful, and Alexander had the satisfaction of forwarding to his father in "Cadell's parcels," the usual manner of communication, a considerable packet of manuscript. The next letter, however, is sent by post:—

I dined with the Doctor yesterday, and he told me that it is quite true Murray is to start a newspaper, but he said that Lockhart is to have nothing to do with the editing of it. It is to be a daily morning paper, to take the High Tory side. I would not be in the least surprised if the Doctor were to be the editor himself: he seems to think it will succeed very well. He says that Lockhart was in great doubt about accepting the editorship of the 'Quarterly,' and nothing but the large salary would have induced him to accept. Lockhart is positively to get two thousand a-year, besides many other things in prospect. Maginn says he will get a great many new hands, principally young men.

So much for the new and budding editor. Here we have a glimpse of the anxious young clerk in the scrupulousness of his youth:—

I have been rather out of spirits since I wrote to you on the 31st, as I have had a great deal to do, and so much money passing through my hands, and the bustle has quite distracted me. I shan't be happy till I get my book balanced to-night. I think I have been quite correct, but last week there was really so much to do that I had more than I could set my face to. I have been most regular in balancing it till last week, and have always found it correct, and I daresay it will be correct enough this time.

The reader will be happy to hear that young Alex-

ander's balance was out only by 5s. "I hope you will not be angry," he says, "but you really have no idea of the confusion that prevailed in the warehouse. I am told that I have escaped very well considering, as most of them lose a great deal more at first magazine time." Amid his longings for the home life, and "many thoughts of what you would all be doing," and "how delightful it would be to step in upon you all on New Year's morning," the most shrewd remarks of what was going on, and perceptions of the state of the atmosphere around him, occur from time to time. Murray's newspaper and Lockhart's desertion of the old standard both take a large part in his thoughts. "There will be a famous opportunity for publishing this season," he says, "as both Constable and Murray are taken up about other matters, and I hope you will get something very good." It is only natural that he should be somewhat pleased to hear that Lockhart was not happy about the contributors to the 'Quarterly,' and found them second-hand people; and delighted to report that Mrs Hughes had whispered in his ear, "You will be better without him"; and most of all enchanted with "the heart-stirring number of the 'Magazine'" which comes to console him when he was out of spirits. Though it was seven o'clock when he came in from Baldwin's and found the parcel on his table, he seems to have read it all through without drawing breath, and comments upon each article with enthusiasm. "The Preface is a host in itself," he says, "and I was almost crying with vexation at the Doctor who could write such a thing prostituting his talents as he has been doing. I never read anything so splendid and written with so much

tact, and when I got to the conclusion I longed to have Uncle Thomas strike up 'Maggie Lauder,' and join in the tol-de-rol," &c.

It was also through Alexander that the first threatenings of the storm which was so soon and with such disastrous effect to fall upon the publishing trade both in London and Edinburgh, were made known to his father.

There is a dreadful scarcity of money in the city just now, and I have heard it rumoured that Whittaker and Knight Stacey were both on the point of crashing. If Whittaker goes, Waugh & Innes must go; therefore I hope you will not give him any accommodation, as you might just as well throw away your money at once. I have learned that Hurst & Robinson's bills have been returned to-day, and from the confusion that the trade is in just now, I think it would be nonsense to publish anything. If it is true, it will almost ruin Constable, and I have little doubt that it is true.

It *was* true, as all the world soon knew, and involved consequences more noteworthy than even the ruin of Constable—the catastrophe of Scott, and the heroic struggle that followed. Alexander continues a few days afterwards.

Alexander Blackwood to his Father.

The information I wrote to you with regard to Hurst has turned out quite correct, and, of course, has made a great noise and alarmed everybody. I saw poor Mr Cadell the day before yesterday, and he certainly had a face which beggared description. He has only lost two or three hundred pounds by Hurst, but he has a good many sums out amongst some of the booksellers who have failed, and this is quite enough to make him miserable. Everybody seems to be distracted just now, and even Longman's people are said to be in great difficulty, and involved a good deal through Hurst's brothers. Constable has been in town since the beginning of the week. . . .

I am beginning to weary very much to see you all, and look with great delight to our meeting; but I must just wait patiently. I am doing as much as I can to make myself acquainted with the collecting, though it is great drudgery and very hard work, and often very little advantage to myself, as I very frequently get long walks about the most trifling things, which is a sad waste of time.

This business [(the ruin of Constable) he adds] will make you the first bookseller in Scotland, and I think the Whigs will feel this most dreadfully. I can conceive what a state the Edinburgh Whigs must be in about C. [he adds later]; they have certainly used all means to assist him. The 'Edinburgh Review' cannot be had here at present. Do you know the reason for this? We were only able to get two-thirds of our usual number. . . . I am afraid you will be in rather an awkward predicament with Ballantyne, and his printing will not be carried on so effectively as formerly. I am afraid you will hardly be able to get Sir Walter's novels without being too much involved with Ballantyne. I don't think Murray is anxious about publishing, but has set all his mind on the newspaper.

The newspaper, however, by this time was beginning to appear a very uncertain speculation. Cadell thinks it *very tame*, and though Galt had a higher opinion of it than at first, it was evidently "not popular by any means." "Do not forget to write to Crowe," adds this young man of business.

The only chance you have of getting his work is by writing to him constantly about it. This is a capital time for a good novel, as nobody is publishing but Colburn. Do tell the Professor to get on with the 'Expiation,' and tell him that it is much inquired after here. I went round to Mr Galt last night, and have got the 'Omen' finished. He is to set seriously to work at the 'Lairds' now that he has got rid of the 'Omen,' of which he and I are equally tired. . . .

I like the collecting very much in some respects [he adds],

but it is most horrid drudgery in others, as you get such loads to carry, and have such long dirty walks, for the streets here are always dirty. However, I hear and see a good deal of what is going on, and get a little acquainted with the booksellers.

Besides all this, the young man keeps a keen eye upon the contributors, giving his father many hints about their peculiarities. It is of no use hurrying Robinson, who is getting on with his article, but writes very slowly, and must not be interfered with. Dr Maginn, though "a queer hand," must not be allowed to drop, seeing how much he can do, if he pleases. "It is very likely, if you are on your guard, that you may pick up Southey, as Mr Galt seems to think he may be turned off from the 'Quarterly'; and he would be a great acquisition to you." Thus he goes on trudging about the dirty streets with his blue bag on his shoulder, not complaining though he feels it to be dreadful drudgery, shrewdly regarding the booksellers, the authors, with clear-sighted, much-observant eyes.

The collecting, however, got more and more trying to the young man, whose mind was full of many other subjects; and here he comes before us in a different point of view—a dutiful boy deeply grieved to have incurred, as he feels he must do, the father's censure, but very innocently, it is clear.

Baldwin's people have been sadly distressed for money, and don't seem yet to be very plenty of it. I am sorry to say that owing to this the collectors have been put about very much, as we never could get money when we required it, and were obliged to use our own money and get memorandums put down for what we ought to have paid, so that my cash for the last two months has been very irregularly kept. I do assure you that I did whatever I could to keep myself straight in balancing, but I find I am deficient in my collecting account—about £6—and

for the last fortnight this has been vexing me very much, and I never could make up my mind to write to you about it. I know how much this will vex you, but I think it better to write to you about it, hoping that you will forgive me. Many of the collectors, I assure you, have lost much more the first four months they collected, but that is no excuse for me.

In the meantime the family were getting anxious about the outset of Willie upon the world. There had been already various suggestions about the time he was to depart, specially because Mr Hastie, the kind host of Alexander, was also going to Calcutta, and it was thought that it would be a great advantage for the boy to accompany him. This, however, proved at last impossible, and the elder brother consoles his father for the failure of this arrangement with the sensible conclusion that, though a disappointment, it would not be of so much consequence as they all thought.

It would certainly have kept up Willie's spirits had Mr Hastie been with him on the voyage, but when he gets to Calcutta it will make very little difference, as he will find so many friends there who will be ready to give him a word of good advice. You must be all very dull just now, and I wish much that I had not come to London, that we might have all been together before parting with Willie for such a long time; but it cannot be helped now.

The young man had a little holiday to cheer him during this spring, which he spent in a trip to Paris with his uncle and cousin, regretting much his neglect of French. It is needless to quote his remarks on this subject, though they are lively and fresh. Uncle Thomas, evidently with an insular prejudice against French cooking, alarmed the boys by telling them that he himself lived chiefly on potato soup while in

Paris; but the two sturdy young Britons declared valorously that, whatever he might do, they meant to have more substantial fare, which they found accordingly in Véfour's apparently, in the Palais Royal, where the dinners called forth enlightened applause and appreciation. Alexander, however, was chary of description, and contented himself with "enjoying himself very much," and telling his admiring friends that he did so. He was back again in London for some time before the arrival in the beginning of June of his father with the eager and excited but somewhat sad boy, who was going so far, and whose departure had been looked forward to with so much sorrow yet expectation as a great and inevitable event. The father and his two boys did some sight-seeing together, the invincible lightheartedness of youth breaking the shadow of parting that hung over them: and the last details of Willie's outfit and the needful introductions to everybody within reach who would be likely to help him on his arrival in Calcutta occupying every busy moment, until the little party went down together, keeping up each other's spirits as best they could, to see him off. It was a parting very different from anything we can think of now. Months must elapse before the anxious parents could hear a word of their boy, and long intervals of silence—for us, thank God, bridged over by so many possibilities of intercourse through post and telegraph—were then inevitable. Yet the parting was hopeful, for all were young—the father in the very prime of life, not quite fifty, and as sure as mortal man could be of living to see the cadet return triumphant. They never met again.

Henceforward it is Mr Blackwood himself who takes the pen. Alexander returned from London shortly after, and all were reunited except the one beloved boy out upon the high seas and soon to be landed in so strange and new a world, for whose benefit the father began such a history and picture of the family and of his own anxious yet trustful paternal heart as it is rare to find. The simplicity of the household narrative, with all its allusions and affectionate jests, its mixture of the familiar and the serious, inspired through and through with intense fatherly affection, and the anxious advice and instruction of which his heart was full, is exceedingly attractive. We have had a glimpse of the elder son in his youthful devotion to his home and his work. These letters of the father embody that home itself in all the genial life of the affections, the happy privacy, the many interests which surrounded the cheerful and abundant house. The record begins from the very moment of the parting. The first letter is dated from Salisbury Road, Monday morning, 6 o'clock, 26th June 1826 :—

W. Blackwood to his Son William.

Many an anxious thought I have had since I parted with you on board of the Hope as to how you would be standing the voyage, how you would be feeling, how you would be occupying yourself, and how you found yourself with the Captain and your fellow-passengers, particularly your cabin companion. I hope you have found all to your mind, and that you have been writing every day almost, full details of all that you have been thinking, feeling, and doing, for you cannot write to us too much or too often. You sailed with such a fair wind and have had such favourable weather ever since that I expect you have made great progress in your voyage, and that you will

have had the opportunity ere now of some ship to send us letters by. I need not tell you how much your mother and all of us will weary for them.

Alexander and I got back to London on the Thursday morning at 6 o'clock. I was then of course very impatient to get home, and having hurried over everything I had to do in London, Mr Hastie and Alexander dined with me at Mr Galt's on Saturday, and in the evening they went with me in a boat to Blackwall, and went with me also on board the Soho, where they stopped with me till one o'clock in the morning. Among our other bumpers, we did not fail to drink your good health and that of all friends in India, and a happy meeting with them.

After a most delightful voyage we landed at Newhaven on Tuesday morning about half-past six. Bob was in the first boat waiting for me, and we got home as fast as a coach could carry us. All were on foot from your mother to Janet, and all asking about you. Your mother has been poorly ever since we left her, but she is now better and has got up her spirits. Janet and Archie talk a great deal about you, and seeing your picture, and hearing us constantly speaking of you, they will never forget you. Almost every day we drink your health, but Sunday is the great day when they all join us.

There were many things which I should have said to you which have occurred to me since our parting, and there is much I should write you.

I entreat of you, my dear Willie, to be careful of your health, as without good health there can be no enjoyment. Regularity and sobriety are, as every one has told you, the great preservatives everywhere, but particularly in an Eastern climate. I hope you will meet with friends who will take an interest in you, and give their honest advices and cautions which will guide and direct on your first starting on your new career. Much depends on the first step you take, and the care and attention which you pay to your future conduct. The improving of your mind by reading and study, while it will keep you from the idleness which is the root of all evil, will be of the first consequence to you by enabling you to get forward in your profession. You should divide your time into regular portions, devoting so much to one thing and so much to another, as well

as taking proper exercise and recreation, which is as necessary as everything else.

And now that you are so far from us, you will, I trust, find more and more the comfort and advantage there is in looking to God for leading and direction. I feel now most deeply that I have never done what I ought either in showing you the constant example or impressing you as I ought with the importance of your religious duties. I ardently hope, however, that your own heart will be aright directed, and then I should feel quite at ease about you. You will, I hope, make a regular practice of reading your Bible, and also of perusing other religious books you have. These will open your mind to new views and new enjoyments. My heart is too full to write all I feel on this most awful and important of all subjects. Your mother and I do not forget you in our prayers, and we have no doubt but that you remember us in yours.

Thus the kind and simple and fatherly heart accompanied and hovered over — amid a thousand occupations, amid all the joyous din of the children at home, and the many interests that filled every hour — the hurrying ship at sea which carried one lonely boy round the stormy way by the Cape, through months of monotonous voyaging to India. No quick flashing then of telegrams and perpetual news, no hope of speedy return and all the joy of a reunited family. It was not till March of the next year that the first letters from the traveller were received. It was intended that in ten years the boy should come back on his first visit; but before that time the fatherly kind heart was still, and the tender adviser, the affectionate and watchful head of the family, the one constant letter-writer of the house, never saw his Willie again.

The next letter is dated 23rd July 1826, Sunday

morning, and gives a very pleasant picture of the peaceful house.

W. Blackwood to his Son William.

The whole house is quiet just now, and I have risen to write to you. I am sitting in the parlour, and cannot help looking at the fields, which are quite beautiful and ripe for the harvest. The clusters of jargonelles at the side of the window are beginning to colour fast, but you are far away and will not be here to pull any of them. I wonder what you are doing or thinking of at this moment. We weary excessively to hear something of you, however short. I anxiously hope you have been keeping your health and enjoying yourself, and finding all your shipmates agreeable. I expect, too, that you have written to us always something every day, and that you have packets ready to send off by any ship you may meet or from any place you may touch at. . . . Often and often do your mother and I say to each other at morning or night that we wonder what you will be doing or thinking at that moment. Every Sunday, when the little ones all dine with us, the only toast is your health, and a good deal of talk of course follows about you. In this way I think that even Janet will never forget you.

My Magazine is doing better every day. This month I had so much matter that I have been obliged to print two numbers to be published at once. Sir Walter Scott—I believe I told you—gave me a review of the 'Omen,' and since I came home I have seen him frequently, and he has promised to give me several other articles. The Professor is doing a great deal, and so are all my other friends. General business is dreadfully flat and money scarce with every one. The weavers and all manufacturing folk here and in England are in the greatest distress, and there seems little prospect of things turning better. Last week I sent you Ballantyne's 'Weekly Journal,' and I will continue it regularly, as it will let you see how things are going on. Your mother is sitting beside me, and joins in anxious, very anxious, wishes for your happiness and welfare. Think of us at all times, my dearest Willie, and this will make you bear up and exert yourself, in the prospect of distinguishing yourself and coming home to cheer us and make us all happy.

And again, a month later, he writes :—

Sunday, 20*th August* 1826.

How I weary to receive letters from you telling us all you are doing! The great rule in writing is to suppose yourself talking to one of us: in this way you will write with ease to yourself, and the habit will become quite familiar to you, while it will give us the greatest delight.

You must have had many solitary and weary thoughts, yet I trust this has led your mind to turn itself to the only true source of all comfort, that gracious God who has been so good to all of us. It is when separated from all on whom we have been accustomed to rely that we strongly feel the necessity of looking up to Him from whom we never can be separated, and whose ear is ever open to the humble prayer of those who diligently seek Him. Surrounded by our friends and ordinary associates and comforts, we are too apt to forget the bountiful Giver of all these good things. You are, my dearest Willie, far away from all of us and exposed to dangers and temptations of every kind, but I trust that your mind will be opened, and to lay hold on religion as your only sure stay, and that a kind Providence will continually watch over you. Perhaps just now you will think I am writing too seriously, but it is impossible to me to express the anxiety I now feel about you with regard to these matters. Much do I now regret that I did not strive more earnestly to impress these things upon you. No one is out of bed yet except Archie, who has just come in, and when I told him I was writing to you, he has given me a kiss for you, and desired me to "tell Willie I am sorry for him."

Trade of every kind is still very flat here. I never knew our trade so dull, and so very little going. My Magazine, however, goes on flourishing, and the sale is increasing. Mr Robinson's articles on Free Trade, the Corn Trade, &c., have done a great deal for it.

Though I expect you to draw your principal pleasure from your studies, I do not suppose but that you are also to take your share in any amusements or recreations that you find can be indulged in without interfering with your more serious pursuits. There is one amusement, however, which I would most seriously

warn you against, and which I most anxiously trust you will never be drawn into. I mean gaming. This is a vice of the most odious kind, and never fails to end in the ruin of those who engage in it. For God's sake beware of it in every shape, for it is so enticing that the unfortunate victim is hurried on before he is aware. Besides its ruinous consequences to a person's prospects or respectability, it generally changes the temper and disposition, rendering one irritable, and leading often to deadly and fatal quarrels. This puts me in mind to warn you with regard to the government of your temper and feelings. You have, like myself, naturally a warm temper, and you have on all occasions much need to be on your guard. In society there must often arise differences of opinion, and one should be prepared to meet them calmly, and if one finds oneself not treated with that respect one feels oneself entitled to while taking care to support one's own position, we should always, if possible, avoid showing any disposition to pick a quarrel. Nothing makes a man look so little as minding trifles which can often be turned off better by a joke. I anxiously hope you will meet with some sincere and judicious friend who will take a fatherly charge of you, and whose advice will be invaluable to you. It will also be a great happiness to you if you are so fortunate as to obtain the acquaintance and friendship of any one about your own age who is well-principled and anxious about his profession and improvement. But if such a companion would be most useful to you, so, on the other hand, would one of an opposite description be most hurtful. Above all things beware of all intimacy with loose, idle, dissipated young men. Everything depends upon the first impressions you make, and your steady and consistent conduct afterwards. And every young man's character is very much judged of at first by the character of those with whom he associates. And this in the end will prove to be a pretty fair rule; for though a young man at first, when he associates with such characters, may really be not at all such a one as they are, yet by constant intercourse his feeling is blunted, and at last he participates in those dissipations which at the first he perfectly abhorred.

I need not tell you how happy it will make your mother and me to hear that you have obtained the friendship of the good

and virtuous. This will cheer us up while you are so far away from us, and give us the prospect of your returning home an honour and credit to yourself and all with whom you are connected. Above all, it will console us for your absence by our firm conviction that you are yourself happy, for even in this life there is no true happiness or enjoyment unless in good and virtuous conduct.

This is a Sabbath day's letter, and I hope you will not weary of such a sermon.

We must add a few of the lighter details of the family party with which the absent son was amused and consoled. They open to us the most cheerful company of good people, full of family affection and kindness, and many scenes of that assured and tranquil life in which no great thing happens, but in which all the events of life are developing—the children growing up, the sons beginning to go out into the world, the humours of the household, and all its allusions and habits perfectly known to the distant boyish reader, whom every little anecdote of Jamie or Janet would amuse, and the freshness of the home landscape refresh and invigorate. It is one curious feature of the correspondence that it is the father's letters almost alone which keep up this constant intercourse: now and then there is a letter from Robert, at very long intervals a word or two from the mother or aunt. But it is the much-occupied head of the house, he whose correspondence extended over so large a number of troublesome interlocutors, and who had constant and bewildering calls upon his attention from half-a-dozen quarters at once, who was the patient recorder of family incidents, the constant adviser, the anxious annotator of every circumstance in his boy's career. Usually it is

the women of the family who keep up such a correspondence; and the mothers and sisters who superintend from a distance the welfare of the young men scattered in every quarter of the earth know well what a constant source of occupation this correspondence is. But here, though the family affection was warm, and the younger members of the household were closely united, it was the father upon whom this additional charge was laid, and who got up early in the morning (which was his habit) to write to Willie all the tender trifles of the day and details of the intimate concerns of the race, the constant visits to Carfin, the constant meetings of uncles and aunts, the prospects of Carfin Jack, and uncle Thomas's Bob — and the Steuarts, the Hasties, the Shanks, and many more,—the young ones all cousins and contemporaries of his own, many of them following to India, all standing on the threshold of active life. It is unnecessary here to enter into the varied story of Blackwoods, Steuarts, and Shanks; but it furnishes a lively background, like the subordinate scenes of an old Italian picture, to the immediate record of the family.

W. Blackwood to his son William.

9th Jan. 1827.

The 20th of Nov. was my 50th birthday, and we had your uncles Thomas and John, with your aunts and some of your cousins, to dinner. You were the only absentee, but you may be sure your health was not forgot. The New Year's dinner this time was held at your uncle Thomas's, when old and young of us were all there, with Archie Steuart and Annie, and two of the Misses Weir, making a party of us of 30 who all sat down to dinner. Even our little Janet sat at table, and behaved like a lady. She sang "Duncan Gray," and Archie "The

Roving Boy," with the row tow tow,—or at least they made their little attempts, which were of course well ruffed. The whole passed off most joyously, and I never saw your aunt Thomas in such good spirits.

Isabella came home the Saturday before Christmas from Miss Lee's, and I should have sent you her letter which she gave me before that time. I now enclose it. She likes Miss Lee's very much, and has improved a good deal by being there. She has, however, been rather unwell, and is still at home with us. James favoured her occasionally with a call at the Royal Circus. Miss Lee told me she was very much amused one day when she was called down to the parlour expecting to see a gentleman who had announced himself to the servant as Mr James Blackwood, and found the little man waiting for her. It was a bad day, and he was buttoned up in his cloak. She had puzzled herself very much to think who this Mr James B. could be, but she was very much pleased with his manly air and demeanour. He is going on very well with Mr Mackay, and stands commonly from 8th to 12th dux. To-day he got up to be dux, and came home 2d, so you may easily conceive the little man is occasionally vain. Alexander and Robert say I spoil him, and blow up his self-conceit.

I was sorry to see the little interest he (Charles) and Archie took in each other. Indeed they seem to have little or no feeling about any one. I hope, my dear Willie, you will always retain your warm affections though so far separated from us. Janet says you are to send her a necklace. Archie, he is quite engaged about the general mourning for the Duke of York, and this afternoon he was petitioning your mother very hard for a crape to his hat—he said he was sure you would have a great black knot, and a crape round your arm.

In about a fortnight I will publish 'Elizabeth de Bruce,' by Mrs Johnston from Inverness, whom you will recollect. It is a clever book, and will, I think, sell well. I have sold off all the first edition of the 'Subaltern,' consisting of 2500 copies, and I have sold nearly 1000 of the second edition, which I published only a few weeks ago. I am also printing a splendid and first-rate novel, 'Cyril Thornton.' It is by Captain Hamilton, but this you must not mention to any one. It is, I think,

superior to either 'Marriage' or 'The Inheritance.' I sell now upwards of 5000 copies of the Magazine. Considering everything, therefore, in these times of universal distress, I have great reason to be satisfied.

We may add a few details of the younger brothers and sisters before we proceed further. In Edinburgh, at least, the kind and cheerful countenance of Mr James Blackwood will be distinctly remembered by many a reader. The conceit of which his father laughingly speaks had not survived the impact of years, and I can remember no more friendly face, no more kind accost, than that of this brother, who having never any connection with the Magazine except that of relationship (let the phrase he excused, for 'Maga' was a person to all the Blackwoods and all their surroundings), does not come immediately within my sphere. "He had no pride," says a homely witness, a respectable old printer, Mr Samuel Kinnear, who has favoured me with some graphic notes of his old employers; "if he met any servant in the street, or poor person, though what they might be carrying was very ungenteel, he would stop and speak to them." His pride was a delightful complacency in his schoolboy attainments. "He is 11th dux," writes Alexander to William; "I wish he was a little lower for one year, to bring down his pride." "I told you," says Robert, "about Mackay [one of the High School masters] and him. "Jamie lost three places and was proceeding to explain how it was, when Mackay called out, 'No speeches, James,' which set the whole class in a roar. He has an awful deal of gab, and an argument for every occasion." A scrap of a letter from Jamie himself may fitly wind up these intimations of his

character. "Tom and Johnnie are commencing skating," says this small hero, "and are coming on pretty well. I will now return to the more agreeable subject of the hanging, of which I cannot give you a correct account, for all that I know about it is from Robert and Alexander, who went and slept at a man's house all night on purpose to see the hanging. I daresay you will think them great fools for their pains."

Johnnie, the future Editor, and perhaps the most gifted of Mr Blackwood's sons, was idle and thoughtless, at this early age, according to the family report, and never so far up in school as he ought to have been. "A very idle scholar," says Alexander, "but reads history from morning to night, and is a perfect biographer." His father's description of him is still more graphic, and his account of the boy's memory extending *even* to the Bible, amusing :—

> Johnny is a very quick and thoughtless little creature, and does not distinguish himself so much at Andrew's school as he could do. He is fond of play and mischief, but when in the house he is constantly reading some book or other. His memory is capital, and he can give an account of whatever he reads, even if it be some chapters of the Bible. Your mother promised him 20/ if he read through the whole Bible, and he has now finished the Old Testament. He will go to the High School in October.

The infant pair, Archie and Janet, are in almost every letter, as has already been seen—the little boy simple and gentle, the little girl dominating his milder nature. "Archie is a very soft brother, but Janet is as sharp as a needle and is a precious kempie," the elder brother says. These little ones grew into a stately pair, tall and largely developed, the one ending

his days prematurely a colonel in the East India Company's service, the other early married to Archibald Smith, Sheriff-Substitute of Glasgow, and the mother of four sons. They belonged to the dark section of the family, which was curiously divided into a mother's and a father's side, half of them tall with black hair and blue eyes, the other half shorter, fairer, and ruddy in their father's cheerful image. James and John were of this latter type. Both daughters resembled their mother, with wonderful masses of "raven" hair, which was then the poetic ideal, as golden, auburn, and red have been since. Isabella, who has survived all her generation, never up to old age has forgotten her attitude as the admired and favoured young lady of the family, accustomed to be first, and though really a most capable woman in every respect, yet pleased to be considered helpless, and endowed with all the pretty caprices of woman, as identified in the first half of the century.

We resume the family letters after this digression. It is astonishing to reflect that all that have been already quoted were written before any news had been received of the arrival of young William in India. Nine weary months elapsed before the joyous news arrived, and the distant son appeared again by his letters in the midst of the affectionate group which remembered him so tenderly.

W. Blackwood to his Son William.

13*th March* 1827.

Your letters of 28th and 29th Oct. giving us the accounts of your safe arrival at Calcutta have made us all happy indeed. We cannot be sufficiently thankful to that kind Providence

that has watched over you during such a voyage, and has given you so many kind friends to receive you on your landing. I anxiously trust that all this will be an omen of your future progress in India.

You will be surprised when I tell you that the first account of your arrival in Calcutta I received in a note on Wednesday from Dr Brewster, containing an extract of a letter from Mr Swinton. I enclose you Dr B.'s note that you may see what he says. It is impossible for me to tell you how I was affected when I got this certain intelligence of your being safe and well in Calcutta. Alex., Bob, and George Steele were, of course, the first who heard the good news, and rejoiced with me. I instantly hurried home, calling at the N. Bridge on my way, where your uncles and cousins were equally happy to hear of you. I need not tell you how much your mother was affected, nor what glad tears your aunt shed with us on the occasion. We were not disappointed at receiving no letters from yourself, as I found by Mr Swinton's letter, which Dr B. sent me that forenoon also, that the Duke of Lancaster had arrived at Liverpool, and that therefore your packet would be forwarded to London to Mr Freeling. We were satisfied you were well, and could therefore wait patiently for a day or two. Owing to the stoppage of the roads by a dreadful snowstorm, the mail of Friday did not arrive till Saturday morning; but just as Alex., Bob, and I were coming down the road, we met Mark, poor bodie, blowing and out of breath to catch us before leaving home, and whenever we saw him we were sure he had your packet.

I first read your letter to me, and then Bob read his, and we were all as happy as it is possible to be. The details you give are most satisfactory, and give us such a complete picture of your proceedings on first landing, and of the friends who have been so kind to you. It is most gratifying to me that you express yourself so well, and I intreat of you, my dearest Willie, to continue to write often and fully with regard to everything. All that happens to you, all that you feel or think, will always be most interesting to us; and while you will enjoy the happiness of pouring out your heart and giving vent to all your feelings, you will in some measure make up

to us for being so far separated from us. The very habit too of writing will every day become easier to you, and will also, of itself, be of the greatest consequence to you.

On Saturday I called on Mrs Bruce and Sir William Fettes. The old gentleman was perfectly delighted when I read him the paragraph of your letter with regard to Col. Watson. He said he had always expected and would always be gratified by hearing of or from the Col. You should let the Col. know how much Sir William would like to have a letter, however short.

You should be very careful, both while you are in Calcutta and after you leave it, to keep up your connection with all those to whom you have been introduced, and who have been friendly to you. Your private journal of all your occurrences will prevent you from forgetting any one.

21*st April* 1827.

On the 13th March I wrote you a very long letter to tell you how happy we had all been at receipt of your most welcome letter of the 29th Oct., giving us the accounts of your safe arrival at Calcutta. On Sunday, the 1st curt., we had again the happiness of hearing from you by receiving your large and most interesting packet which you dispatched from Madras. Every night after we received your Calcutta packet we had expected it, and being Sunday night when it arrived, when we were all sitting round the fire, you can easily conceive the hubbub there was when Mr Freeling's name was discovered on a packet among the letters and papers which Mark brought, and old and young, from your mother to little Janet, shouted out, "Letters from Willie! Letters from Willie!" Isabella being at Miss Lee's, was the only one absent.

I do not know when I felt so happy as receiving your letters, and enjoying the joy of your mother, aunt, and all the rest at hearing such long and satisfactory details from you. We entered most thoroughly into all your transactions and feelings, whether sad or joyous, during your voyage, and though it took me about two hours and a half to read aloud all your letters, none of us thought them long, but wished you had given us even more. For the time we felt almost as if you were with us,

and telling us all that interested you, but very soon came the thought that you were so far separated from us, and the anxious feeling as to what you would now be doing, and how you would be enjoying yourself.

27th April 1827.

Hogg was in town, and we had a capital Noctes at Ambrose's on Tuesday. The Professor was in the chair, and I was croupier. Captn. Hamilton, Robert and Jas. Wilson, Delta, your uncle Thos., &c., fourteen in all of us, sat down to dinner, and kept it up till nearly 12 o'clock. I never saw the Professor and Hogg in greater glee, and we had a most delightful evening.

The Magazine is continuing to increase every day, and I expect I will soon have to enlarge the impression, which is at present 6300. You will see by the newspapers what a strange mistake there has been in the Ministry. Canning, by intriguing with the King's favourite, the Marchioness of Conyngham, has got himself made Premier, and all the High Tory Party have resigned. For the sake of the country I hope the Ministry will not stand, but if it does it will be no disadvantage to you as Mr Hughes's friend. Mr Wynne is a leading member of it. Some time ago, before the change, he was talked of as likely to be the new Governor-General of India, and it is probable enough he will now be so, or some one of his friends will be appointed. This change, too, whatever way it terminates, will be of use to my Magazine, as it is the only journal which has espoused the cause of the High Tories, and for years attacked the Liberals and Free Trade Political Economists. All parties now admit that our papers have displayed more talent than has ever been brought forward on our side of the question, and the High Tories will now find it still more their interest to patronise the Magazine as their organ, in the same way as the Whigs have always supported the 'Edinburgh Review.' However, you will not bother your head with politics, as I believe it is rather an interdicted subject in India. I believe the India Coy. do not like any of their subjects to meddle with anything of the kind, more particularly India politics. You will, therefore, be cautious on all occasions as to your opinions.

10th June 1827.

I would like very much you would give me a little journal of a week, just mentioning when you rose, breakfasted, dined, how you were occupied from hour to hour. This would give us just a picture, as it were, of your mode of life, and what you were thinking and doing.

'Napoleon,' it is said, will be published next week. Sir Walter has made it nine volumes. I intended to have sent you off 'Cyril Thornton' last week, but I have kept them, and will despatch the box the moment I can get 'Napoleon.'

1st July 1827.

In my last I mentioned that I would send you some books as soon as Sir Walter Scott's 'Life of Napoleon' was ready. It was published on Thursday last, but as a favour I got copies sooner from Cadell (Constable's partner, who is the publisher here), and had them bound in Russia, and packed in a box along with the other books of which I enclose you a list, and sent it off by the steam packet on Tuesday with directions to Cadell's people to forward it by the very first ship for Calcutta. You will present Mr Robert Hastie with a copy of 'Napoleon' and a copy of 'Cyril,' and say I would have written him to thank him for all his kindness, but you will do it for me. I fancy he is no great reader, but I hope it will please him to have 'Napoleon' so early to show to any of his friends, and I think he would like some of the Glasgow scenes in 'Cyril Thornton,' though Mr James, if he has still as much Glasgow partiality as ever, will be rather sore at the way in which the elegance of the capital of the west is shown up.

I hope the books I send will amuse you in your solitary hours, and some of them perhaps you may present to any friends who have been kind to you. Write me particularly if there are any books you want which may be useful to you either professionally or in your general studies. I am most anxious you should continue to improve your mind as much as possible. Every day you will find the advantage of this both in adding to your own happiness in the meantime, and in fitting you for availing yourself of any opportunities of advancement that may come in your way.

Sir Walter's 'Napoleon' you should carefully study, as it will make you completely the master of the history of the last thirty years, which is by far the most remarkable period in the history of Europe. 'Cyril Thornton' you will be quite delighted with in all its parts. Everybody likes it, but it has not yet sold so extensively as it deserves: it is, however, sure to go off. In this No. of 'Maga' there is a long review of it by Prof. W. Pollok's 'Course of Time' and Aird's 'Characteristics' are two extraordinary books, and you will be better able to read them after reading the reviews in the June No. The little 'Essay on Faith' is also a clever book by a Mr Cryttan, and I hope you will read all these three on your Sundays. In case of the No. of 'Maga' not reaching you regularly, I have sent the 21st volume, half-bound, and three copies of the new No., 2 of which you can give to any of your friends. 'Maga' will, I am sure, amuse and interest you more than anything else. Our two Nos. last month were better liked than ever, and nobody complained of our giving them a double portion—on the contrary, it seemed to have the best effect, as showing what a superabundance of matter we had always at command.

Janet has got a new green bonnet, and is as fine as can be. She has a great turn for dress and neatness. She is much too quick for Archie, and is apt to try to rule over him. He is now in the spelling-book, but is no great scholar yet. Johnnie and Tom are also but moderate, but they are very idle. James still keeps about 12th dux, but if he wrought hard he would stand higher.

15th Aug. 1827.

I wrote the preceding sheet this morning before breakfast. We are all just now returned home, as the shops are shut, this being the day appointed for laying the foundation-stones of the two new Bridges which you know are to be built, now that the Bill for the new Improvements has been passed. This ceremony is quite premature, as a considerable time must elapse before the Bridges or any part of the Improvements can be commenced; but that vain body Trotter was determined to have the show while he was Provost, and as a kind of excuse for forcing the thing so soon, he fixed the day in compliment to the

King, as it was the anniversary of his landing and reception in Edinburgh. What a ludicrous contrast this was to that glorious and memorable day! It has been a close, thick, drizzling rain all day, and still continues at the moment when I hear the Castle guns firing in token that the foundation-stone of the Cowgate Bridge is just laying. I enclose a programme of the procession, which you will see was to have been a very fine thing; but the wetness of the day spoiled everything, and besides, Trotter being so unpopular, very few turned out to join the procession. There was a great assemblage of Mason lodges, and the Town Council, with the Merchant Company, the Commissioners for the Improvements, and the Canongate and Portsburgh Bailies and Trades, were in the procession; but there was not a single nobleman or gentleman, or any of the inhabitants there except those belonging to some of those public bodies. Your mother, aunt, and the children came into the shop, where we had a good view of the whole, but it produced no effect whatever. There was a great crowd on the streets, and all got a complete *drouking*. One was vexed to see it, though not sorry that Trotter's vanity should be mortified. There is to be a dinner at the Waterloo Hotel at 6 o'clock, but there will be nobody worth while there.

Both last season and the year before all business has been very flat indeed, and I fear it will not return to its former state for some time. I have, however, had great reason to be thankful, for we have been doing much better than could have been expected. All the books I have published have done very fairly, and the Magazine now brings me in so much monthly that it makes me in a very different state from most others, and always gives me something to be busy with. I hope you will have received the box of books containing 'Cyril Thornton,' 'Napoleon,' &c., before this reaches you. You will enjoy 'Cyril Thornton' very much. It is most popular, and I have sold about 1300 copies of it. If times had been better, I would have sold double or treble this quantity. I have not suffered any great loss by not publishing Sir Walter's 'Napoleon,' for the publishers paid such a high price for each copy that they could not make much by it even if they had sold the whole, and I suspect they have a good many on hand,

as the sale seems to be over. It is much too long and too dear a book. People rather appear to be disappointed with it, though it contains a good deal of amusing and interesting matter. You should read it all very carefully, as it will give you a capital view of the whole progress of the revolution in France, and the changes in Europe for the last thirty years and upwards.

EDINBURGH, 9*th Sep.* 1827.

I was quite aware that politics ran very high at Calcutta, for I occasionally see Bryce's paper. Your accounts of 'Maga' being almost the only magazine that is read or heard of in India are very gratifying, and I hear the same from every quarter. We are flourishing more and more every day; the sale now is upwards of 6000, and is still going on. It has been most fortunate for me that for the last eighteen months, when everything else has been so dull, that I have such a valuable and profitable concern. Mr Robinson's articles have been most popular and acceptable, being, in fact, the expression of the feelings and sentiments of all true Tories, so that 'Maga' has become the organ of the party, and has a prodigious influence. In last number we had no politics at all; and it was just as well, Canning's death being so recent, and the Ministerial arrangements not at all settled. There has evidently been a great deal of intrigue going on from the jealousy of the Tory and Whig portions of the Ministry. And though there is an apparent settlement just now, I do not think it is to continue long. The Whigs seem to have submitted in order that they might keep their place, but they will not be at rest till they either obtain more power or are turned out altogether.

You will see by the paper that the venerable Sir Henry Moncreiff died two or three weeks ago. His death is a great loss. I am glad you heard him preach before you went away, for he might be considered as the last of that race of Scottish ministers, and we are never likely again to see a man like him in a Scottish pulpit. Dr Andrew Thomson preached his funeral sermon. Bob and I heard it. There was a most prodigious multitude in the church, and thousands went away who could not get in. It was a capital sermon, and he gave a most

impressive and interesting account of Sir Henry's life and character and last illness. There is a keen canvas going on to fill his place. The two candidates are Mr Paul, a nephew of Sir Henry, and Mr Smith, the nephew of Lord Gillies, but it is thought the former will be successful, and he is supported by the whole Session.

27th Jan. 1828.

The change of Ministry has given great joy to all good Tories here. On the very day that the Duke of Wellington was sent for, at the very commencement of the business, he wrote me the following note, enclosing a draft for £25, 10s. on Coutts, for the set of the Magazine :—

"The Duke of Wellington sends Mr Blackwood a draft for the amount which the Duke is indebted to Mr Blackwood, with the Duke's best compliments."

Such a note at such a time is no small honour. He could easily have made any of his secretaries write me, but he writes with his own hand, and gives me his best compts. I daresay the Post Office people here would stare when they saw a letter to me franked by the Duke, for it was at the very moment when every one was on tiptoe, and in the greatest anxiety to hear if the change of Ministry was to take place, and what it would be. Lord Melville, you will see, is the new President of the Board of Controul, and if anything can be done for you, I hope I will have some influence with him, as I am entitled to apply to him. These changes tend to make the Magazine still more popular, as we have been consistent all along, and held on our course without fear or favour as to who were out and who were in. The Professor dined with me at Ambrose's on the 21st, and we concocted the P.S. to this number, which I enclose you. It was absolutely necessary to say something in the number relative to the breaking up of the Ministry, and we waited till the last moment to see what was settled. We have other two excellent articles in the No. cutting up the Whigs and the late Ministry, and prophesying their downfall. These were written, and mostly printed, before the change was even hinted at, but they are still more seasonable now that it has taken place.

I think I wrote you that Mr Pollok, the author of the 'Course of Time,' had fallen into bad health, and had died of consumption in the neighbourhood of Southampton. I published about a fortnight ago a second edition of the poem, and have already sold off the whole impression, consisting of 1500 copies. I have a third edition at press.

I published the other day a very good volume—'Tales of the Moors'—by the author of "Selwyn in Search of a Daughter," "The Bachelor's Rest," and several other articles in 'Maga.' I shall send you a copy in the first box, and I think the 'Tales' will interest you. It is selling very well.

After a most tedious and troublesome correspondence with Sir Henry Stewart, I have at last published his work on Trees, and I have already sold a good many of them. Alexr. (for the Baronet is not contented with pouring his letters in upon me) received a most amusing and original letter from Sir Henry the other day, which he will send you a copy of. It will make Frederick and you laugh very heartily.

Captn. Hamilton is very busy with his 'History of the Campaigns,' and we will begin printing in a few days. It will be an admirable and most saleable book.

There is a very delightful article in the new No. of the 'Quarterly Review' (which I will send you) on Bishop Heber's 'Journals of his Travels in India.' It points out objects of pursuit, and various things most worthy of attention, to all residents in India. What a loss the death of the great and good man was to India, and particularly to the British inhabitants even still more than to the natives! It would be happiness to you indeed if you were to get acquainted with some such man, and let us hope that there are still in India men possessed of similar principles and feelings. He was a true Christian in the noblest sense of the word, and an honour to human nature.

23rd Feb. 1828.

Professor Wilson was much gratified, and you may be sure I was not less so, by hearing of Sir Charles Grey's kindness and attention to you. To be noticed by such a man is what you may indeed be proud of: very few such men are to be met

with anywhere. When you see him again, you can tell him how happy the Professor is to hear of him, and when he received Sir Charles's letter he told me he intended to write him immediately, and will write him very soon. The Professor is in excellent health and spirits, but quite overwrought just now, as, besides his Moral Philosophy Lectures, he is giving a course of lectures on Political Economy. He also writes, as you will see, a great deal in 'Maga.' In this No. he has given a long article on that fellow Leigh Hunt, in which he has cut him up in the most unmerciful style; but the Cockney has recklessly wrought for the punishment inflicted on him. I shall enclose you the sheets with this.

EDIN., 22*nd March* 1828.

Last week was a remarkable and a happy one to us all, for we received two of your packets from Sir Francis Freeling. The first we got on the 12th contained (how strange!) your letter of 26th along with those of 22nd and 27th September. The second we received on the Saturday following the 15th, so your letters to us all from 18th to 15th of November have been exactly four months of coming here. I need not tell you how much we all rejoiced in receiving such full and pleasant accounts from you; above all, we cannot be sufficiently thankful that you have continued in such good health, and that you have done so well for upwards of twelve months. Let us hope that you will get accustomed to the climate and not suffer materially from it. Notwithstanding of what Colonel Watson told you as to the preference that should be given to the Cavalry, I hope in the end that you will be so fortunate as to find yourself as well off in the Infantry. What we did, you know, was for the best, and according to the best advice we could get at the time, and therefore let us hope that all is for the best, as many things we at the time think adverse often turn out the very reverse. I am most gratified by the accounts you give me of the way the Magazine is spoken of in India. I hear the same from all the Indians who come home.

I hope you continue to receive the Magazine regularly, as it must be a great treat to you. I think for the last twelve

months it has been more interesting than ever, and of course the sale greater, with every appearance of increasing. In this number we have fortunately an excellent account of the war between Persia and Russia by Dr M'Neill, which every one will read. As by the London papers it appears that the Peace has not been ratified, and as Russia is going to war with Turkey, it is likely that the country will be involved in the dispute, so that you Indians may be called upon to support poor Persia. Russia has far too much power already, and it is not for the interest of Britain to allow her to make nearer approaches to India. In this number, too, we have another article which will be read with interest in India, "The Siege of Bhurtypore." It is done by Mr Gleig (the Subaltern). I enclose you a copy of it, and I have written a note with it to Lord Combermere, who I think will be pleased with my sending it to him. If he is in Calcutta, you could put it under cover, and call upon his lordship with it. Show it, however, to Major Watson, and take his advice whether it is best for you to call or write a mere note saying you had just received the packet from me. I would fain hope that this may perhaps be of some use to you by bringing you more particularly under his lordship's notice.

30th June 1828.

Often and often do I think of you, and wonder what you will at the moment be thinking or doing. This is particularly the case with me when I awake in these beautiful summer mornings about 5 o'clock. Sometimes I regret much you ever left us, and then I think with myself that all our steps are wisely ordered, and I cheer myself with believing that you have been placed in that sphere where you will not only be happy yourself, but will be useful to those among whom you are placed. I need not tell you how much your mother always thinks about you, though she says less. Lady Robert Kerr called on me the other day with her sister-in-law Mrs ——. Though it is now so long since she saw you, yet I cannot tell you what a satisfaction it was to me to see one who had seen you, and who spoke of you in such a kind and friendly way. My heart grew big, and even the tears came to my eyes. It is a happiness to us all that you

have by your conduct secured so many friends, and I have every confidence that you will every day be securing more. The countenance and approbation of ladies such as this are the surest evidence of the propriety and correctness of your conduct, and by associating when you have opportunities with ladies of high character and elegant manners you will derive the greatest benefit, and will be preserved from low associations, which corrupt both manners and morals. Your reading and studies too will, I hope, be a never-failing resource to you at all times. While your mind will be daily improving and enlarging, you will be daily adding to your enjoyment; for after all, it is in one's own mind that all true happiness must reside, and unless we cultivate it we lose the great end of our existence, both as regards this world and that which is to come. Write me always as to the books you have been reading, whether for mere amusement or more solid instruction—how you like them, and how they strike you. Everything that has interested you will be interesting to us.

'Maga,' I am happy to say, is flourishing more than ever. We now sell very nearly 6500 every month, and the sale is daily increasing. The 'Edinburgh Review,' on the other hand, is every day falling off, and I do not think the sale is so great now as the Mag., though it was once nearly 14,000.

Poor Pollok's poem, the 'Course of Time,' has had a most extraordinary sale. I have disposed of four editions, making altogether nearly 6000 copies, and I am now printing another edition of 3000 copies. I have large orders already for copies, so that I expect to sell all these very soon. 'Cyril Thornton' is nearly all sold off, and I shall have another edition out early in winter. The 'History of the Campaigns' is printing just now, and will be out early in the winter also. This has been a most successful year with me. All my books have done well, and my new 'Agricultural Journal,' I may say, is already fairly established. It is highly liked by everybody, and I expect before the year expires that the sale will be 2000.

Sir Walter has published a second series of the "Chronicles of the Canongate." The story is a stirring lively one, but does not come up to his older productions. He was in London while Bob and I were there. We breakfasted at Dr Hughes's on the

Thursday before we left London, and had the honour of meeting with Sir Walter and the Bishop of Llandaff. After breakfast we all went to St Paul's to visit the monuments, &c., the Bishop, who is Dean of St Paul's, being our cicerone. It was really a treat to go there in such company, and is one of the memorables of one's life. Worthy Mrs Hughes was, I daresay, as happy as it was possible for her kind heart to be. Bob should have written you a full, true, and particular account of all our doings while we were in London, but ever since we came home we have had a great deal to do. I hope, however, both he and Alexr. will write you with this packet.

5th July 1828.

Since I finished the two preceding sheets, it has not been in my power to take up the pen again to write you till now. I have been engaged all week in a keen contest and polling for the Commissionership of Police for Princes Street, St Andrew's Square, &c. A taylor, who is lame too, was Commissioner last year, and a number of the most respectable people in the ward pressed me to stand, and after being fairly engaged in the contest, I did not like to be beat. I got at once, almost without exception, all the respectable voters in the ward; but this creature had all the low whisky-dealers, chairmen, and a whole host of Radicals, who were perfectly enraged that such a Tory and the publisher of such a Magazine should be set over them. We began to canvass on Thursday last week, and Alexr., Robert, and George Steele were most actively engaged, while we had also Deacon Fraser, Mr Marshall, the goldsmith, Mr Lizars, bookseller, and a number of others, also most zealous in calling upon the voters. The poll-booths where the electors have to inscribe their names and the name of their candidate were opened in a room in St Andrew's Street on Monday morning at 10 o'clock, and did not close till Thursday, beginning each day at 10 and closing at 5. At the final close I only carried the election by 11 of a majority, and my opponent threatens to have a scrutiny; so that if there are more of my voters found to be bad than his, he may still unseat me. But of this I think there is little danger. It was quite like the election of a member of Parliament, and there has never almost been such a

keen contest here. Old and young, male and female, attended and gave their votes. One melancholy and distressing circumstance, however, occurred. Miss Ramsay, a fine old lady of nearly 80 years of age, was very anxious to support me, and came to the room in perfectly good health and spirits, but she had only written "William Bl" when she dropped her head, having had an apoplectic attack, and only lived a few minutes. Medical aid was got in a moment, and she was attempted to be bled, but all was over. This fatal occurrence, you may be sure, distressed me a good deal.

I would not have stood for this office had it not been that there is a great deal in the power of the Commissioners of Police this year with regard to the new improvements, &c. Your mother, of course, thinks I should not trouble my head with these things. Still there is no small gratification in having been supported by such respectable people as Gilbert Innes of Stow, the two Dr Hamiltons, the two Bells, the surgeons, the Royal Bank, and all the respectable inhabitants of one of the most important wards.

30th Oct. 1828.

I had a trade sale in Ambrose's Tavern on the 1st and the 3d curt., and there was a capital attendance of the booksellers, our party each day being nearly 40. The sale did uncommonly well, and all were highly pleased. We had a famous Noctes each night, and kept it up till near 2 o'clock in the morning.

The Magazine is continuing to flourish as much as I could wish, and all my other books are selling well. I am printing another edition of Pollok's 'Course of Time.' The success of this poem is extraordinary, for I have sold 9000 copies of it, and the demand continues as great as ever. The printing of Captain Hamilton's 'History of the Campaigns' goes on very slowly, and I am now doubtful if I will be able to get it out this season, as there is little more than a volume printed. It will be a capital book.

I look forward very anxiously to Lord Dalhousie going to India. He returned here with his family about three weeks ago. I did not see him before he set off for London, where he now is; but Lady Dalhousie called on me with Miss Houston

the very day after they landed. She told me she was so glad to be in the shop again that she could not rest till she had called. Miss Houston inquired particularly about you, and she gave me an opportunity of asking her ladyship to mention you to Lord Dalhousie, which she most loudly promised to do, and she said I would soon see Lord D. himself. He does not go out till next August. I do not know yet whether or not she is to go with him. I am sure his Lordship will do what he can for you, and I confidently hope, before his arrival in India, you will have qualified yourself so as to be fit for some good appointment. We must not, of course, trust too much to what his Lordship may do, as he will have so many applications; but, improving yourself in general information and in your profession, there is no fear of your making yourself known and receiving advancement.

12*th April* 1829.

I hope your next letter will give us accounts of your being a Lieutenant. Janet is very anxious for your advance, as she says you are then to send her a necklace. While I am, of course, very anxious for your promotion, I am still more anxious to hear of your progress in the languages and general improvement. This is of the first consequence to you, and I entreat of you, my dearest Willie, to exert yourself to the very utmost. I know well at your time of life, and more particularly in such an enervating climate, it is no easy task to set doggedly about learning languages, &c.; but the more you exert yourself, the easier will it be for you to go on—at least you will have a real enjoyment in the very things which at first were most irksome and laborious. I had a long conversation the other day with a Major Martin, who returned from India about 12 or 18 months ago. He told me that it was entirely by his making himself master of the languages that he got on at all. He was at one time a Professor in the College at Calcutta. He says if you will fairly set yourself to study, there is an absolute certainty of your immediately getting appointments which are more advantageous and more certain than the advance in the service. In this way you will, I hope, exert yourself, and then the reductions in the allowances, which I am sorry to hear from you

are taking place, will be of less consequence to you. The Earl of Dalhousie is to go out in July, and will, I am sure, be a good friend to you; but, as Major Martin says, the great thing is to qualify yourself for appointments, and then your friends can really be of use to you.

You will be surprised when I tell you that I am going to leave Princes Street, and have bought a house in George Street. I have been thinking of a change for some time, as my lease is out at Whitsunday, and I could get much better accommodation elsewhere at a much cheaper rate, the rent of No. 17 being £220 and the warehouse £20. Accordingly, I have bought the house No. 45 George Street, being the fifth west from N. Hanover Street, which you will perhaps recollect is next door to Baron Hume's, and was occupied by Espinasse, the French teacher. Your uncle Thomas too has bought the house next to mine nearer to Hanover Street, as his lease is also out, and his rent in the N. Bridge is £400. We have both paid the same price, 3500 guineas, and we will probably have to spend £1000 to £1500 in the alterations that will be necessary. We will both have fine backrooms with other apartments built on the ground behind our houses. I shall have a more elegant room (lighted from the top) than my present one, with rooms behind it. The upper part of the house I will let off as warerooms, writing-chambers, or dwelling-houses. With what I expect to let, I shall sit at half my present rent and have infinitely better accommodation. The situation too will be fully as good for me, as George Street is every day becoming more and more a place of business, and the east end of Princes Street is now like Charing Cross, a mere place for coaches. Indeed, it is not of much consequence to me where my shop is.

The Magazine must indeed be a treat to you from time to time. I am happy to say it is going on most flourishingly, for we now sell upwards of 7000 copies. The consistency with which it has supported its principles all along, both with regard to politics, trade, and religion, has given it a character and importance which few or no periodicals possess. The Catholic Question, you will see by the paper, is carried, but completely against the voice of the great majority of the people: therefore, though on this point we will be opposed to the Duke of Wel-

lington, it will not harm us, but, on the contrary, be as much in our favour as when we were opposed to the Ministry of Mr Canning. These are fearful times, and I fear very much that this country will rue the day when Papists were admitted to political power. Old Lord Eldon has made a noble stand. His speeches are well worth your reading, particularly his last on the third reading of this atrocious bill.

29th May 1829.

Lord Dalhousie has left this, and is to sail for India in July. Lady D. and her son, Lord Ramsay, promised me to do everything possible for you, but I will write Lord D. himself some time before he sails. I spoke to Sir William Knighton about you, and he has promised to exert himself in your favour. He thought it better not to make an application on your behalf till you had been a little longer in India, and he desired me to write him in August, when he thinks it will be a good time for him to do something for you. I hope you may have seen or heard again from Lord Fife's friend, Sir S. Whittingham. You should write to him to keep him in mind of you. If any things occur to you which would lead to your advancement, and which could be forwarded by my applying to any one here, be sure to mention.

27th June 1829.

You will see by the Edinburgh papers what a gala day we had on Tuesday, taking possession of the new High School. You will recollect the King's visit: the Calton Hill was as crowded, and also the procession in which you took a part at the laying of the foundation-stone. This will give you an idea of what the thing was; but nothing can give you an idea almost of the appearance of the noble hall with the seven hundred boys. The magistrates, professors, clergy, and so many ladies and gentlemen filling every corner of it, and all joining in cheering those passages of the speeches which every one felt as calling forth bursts of enthusiasm, joy, and congratulation, either with regard to the teachers, the architect, the school,—that is, of everything connected with it. The dinner, too, was a most gratifying thing. As a steward I kept a place for the Ettrick

Shepherd on my right hand, with Pyper on my left, and I got your uncle Johnnie and cousin Tom, with Alexander and Robert and several other friends, all round me, so that we made a capital party of ourselves. It was 12 o'clock before we left the Waterloo. You may be sure I was not a little proud on Tuesday to see all accomplished which I had fought for, and which I had often feared would never be brought to a successful issue. How much did I wish that you had been with us, in the procession, in the hall, and at the dinner! Even Archie and Janet were at a window in the Waterloo, and laughed to us as we were passing. All this will recall your own feelings on the former occasion. Now, when you meet with your High School boys, you will enjoy talking about all this.

26th August 1829.

Captain Hamilton's 'History of the Peninsular War' is just finished at press, but the plans of the battles, which the engraver is busy with, will not be ready for a few weeks. I will not publish until the first of December, but as soon as I get them completed, I will send you some copies, that if you choose you may make presents to any officers whom you would like to gratify. It is a most interesting book. Captain Hamilton has gone to the Continent with Mrs H., who is in very bad health.

My Magazine is still going very flourishingly. This month I have printed two numbers at once, and they are first-rate ones. Business of all kinds has been, and continues to be, excessively flat and dull. The poor weavers both in the West Country and in England, and the labouring classes generally, are in the greatest distress. What will become of the country no one can say. Before this reaches you, you will have had accounts of the great success of the Russians, who by the last papers appear to be carrying everything before them, and to be within a hundred miles of Constantinople. It is surely a most absurd policy in this country to have allowed these rascally Russians first to make such inroads into Persia, which opens the way to India; and now to allow them to conquer the Turk, who has always been our faithful ally, is to give them the command of

the Mediterranean as well as the Black Sea. Unless something occur Constantinople must speedily fall: what a change this will make! Surely there will be a change of man and measures ere long, else this country must go to pot.

12th Dec. 1829.

Much has been done by the officers of the Indian army to distinguish themselves, and it is a curious fact that they have done more to illustrate the history, antiquities, and manners of India than the civil servants of the Company, and they stand far higher as literary men than the officers of the King's army. I attribute this in a great measure to their being placed in situations where they are not exposed to the dissipations and distractions of society, and therefore they must usefully employ their leisure in study and the cultivation of their minds. Independent of the advantage such a course must be to their personal respectability and advancement, the pleasure and enjoyment they must have in it is beyond all; for by giving useful and delightful occupation to the mind, it prevents it from following low and debasing pursuits.

I suppose Alexr. or Robert will have written you something about my first Bailieship, and how much the Town Council takes up my time in the forenoons. There are a good many dinners, too, which your mother of course does not like. She says I have been at 14 or 15 already.

We published Captn. Hamilton's 'Annals of the Campaign' about three weeks ago. The book is much liked, and has already sold to a considerable extent. The London booksellers took nearly 1000 copies when it was subscribed. It is one of the neatest and most elegantly got up books I have ever published. Everybody praises its appearance. Captn. H. is gone to Italy with his lady, who is in bad health. He is to send me articles for 'Maga' while he is on the Continent, and I also expect he will write another capital novel.

'Maga' is going on flourishingly as ever, and is now looked up to universally as the first Tory organ. I have more communications sent me than I can make use of, and my great difficulty is keeping back what may be called good articles, and obtaining articles of a novel and striking kind.

During the period covered by these letters the young soldier in India had been appointed to his regiment—the 59th Bengal Native Infantry—and was quartered at Barrackpore, where he had the good luck of finding his cousin Frederick Steuart, who was the medical officer of the regiment, and whose quarters he shared, to the great pleasure and satisfaction of those at home. Many messages to the Doctor occur in the correspondence; and Mrs Blackwood, in one of her rare letters, expresses the characteristic wish that Frederick may tell her son his faults, "as I," she adds with fervour, "never failed to do to him."

The following short extracts from letters from the elder brothers show us the first signs of that perception in their minds that their father was beginning to grow an old man, which arises so quickly among the grown-up children of a family—though still in the humorous stage, when it amused them to report the impossibility of keeping him quiet in a little illness, and the fun of humouring him in his play.

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother William.

6th July 1828.

We had just finished dinner, enter Mr Marcus MacIvor [the porter who brought the letters on Sunday from the Post Office], and a cry is set up that there are letters from Willie: being so long since we heard from you, they were of course the more welcome. A dead silence reigns while your letters of 26th and 28th January were read aloud. Their contents gave us all great delight. Before you receive this I suppose you will be up the country, and escape all the suffocating stew of Fort William. Though you give rather a bad account of the promotion of the regiment, I hope you will have better luck than some of your predecessors.

I start for Glasgow to-morrow morning to settle the accounts, &c., which, I am happy to inform you, are much larger than usual, the Agricultural Journal and the Magazine both flourishing. You will now, I hope, receive the Magazine regularly, as Mr Richardson sends it. My father had a letter from Mrs Hughes to-night, in which she says that the doctor and she will be here on the 16th, and is in great spirits about seeing her darling Edin. so soon.

Bob has returned from London completely spoiled.

13th Dec. 1828.

It is so long since I have written you that it would indeed appear to you, as you say, that I quite forgot how much pleasure I used to derive from a letter from home during my short absence in London. You must not, however, think from this that I would not write you oftener if I had time. For I assure you I have again and again taken pen in hand to write you a long letter, but have always been prevented by something or other. When I get home at night I am tired, and, besides, have always so much to read in the way of business, or perhaps you will say in the way of pleasure, that I have not time to write you though I were able. I was most happy to hear that you had been made first Ensign, and I hope, my dear grenadier, you will be Lieutenant and Adjutant before this reaches you.

There were some very pleasant fellows at Inverleithen, with whom we played quoits in the evening. One of the most amusing things in the week was to see my father playing quoits, and whenever he played, it was an understood thing that nobody was to beat him on any account; but this he had no idea of. I am a capital player myself. Hogg was down one day, and a large party dined with him in the inn, my father in the chair: he made some brilliant speeches, and Hogg sang some of his best songs, and it was a very pleasant party.

My father has been a good deal troubled with cold this winter, and will neither take proper care of himself nor take anything that is good for him. He takes a game at backgammon with Mr Skinner every night.

The Magazine goes on swimmingly, and the business is prospering very much. We have had some very good selling books this season: of Pollok's 'Course of Time' 12,000 copies have been sold, and it is selling as fast as ever. 'Cyril Thornton,' too, is out of print, and a new edition just going to press.

24th Jan. 1829.

You will see by the date at the beginning of this letter that I did not get it finished as I had expected; and as my father has not written you since, I did not think it worth sending by itself. He has been confined to the house with a severe cold for about ten days. He has contrived to write you a few lines: you cannot conceive how unmanageable he has been during his confinement, and it would fill a letter to tell you of his freaks. The rest of us are all well.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother William.

20th August 1829.

John was the last that got a prize:[1] it was a great disgrace that he was not higher, as both Mr Pyper and Mr Muirhead say that he should have been much higher. Mr Pyper says he is one of the oddest boys he ever saw. In the forenoon he will say all his lessons quite well; in the afternoon when called up he will awake as if from a dream and not say a single word right, though he knows all, but will not be at the pains to say it. Archie gets on well at the school; he is a droll fish. The other Sunday I was at home during church, and was sitting in the parlour; the door was open, and I overheard the following dialogue between him and Janet:—

Archie. Is Bob away to the kirk?

Janet. Yes.

Archie. Are you quite sure?

Janet. No.

Archie (*in great alarm*). Go away and look.

Janet, after searching about for some time, put her head in at the parlour door and went down-stairs. I slipped after.

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[1] At the opening of the High School described by Mr Blackwood.

Janet. He is up in the parlour.

Archie (*in great alarm*). Come away and we'll put by the whip.

You would have laughed had you seen their faces when they saw me.

You mention that your height is 5 feet 11: you are fully two inches taller than me, and I am very nigh an inch taller than Alexander. What weight are you? I weigh 10 stone 6 lb., and am not fat, so I am pretty solid.

CHAPTER XV.

DOMESTIC AND PUBLIC LIFE.

FAMILY CHANGES—REMOVAL TO THE NEW TOWN—LORD DALHOUSIE BEFRIENDS THE YOUNG SUBALTERN—ALEXANDER AND ROBERT BLACKWOOD JOIN THEIR FATHER IN THE BUSINESS—THE REFORM BILL AND STAGNATION OF TRADE—ELECTION DISTURBANCES—'MAGA' TRUE TO HER PRINCIPLES—THE WINDOWS IN GEORGE STREET SMASHED—LETTER FROM THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE—POLITICAL ACTIVITY—DEATH OF JAMES BALLANTYNE—MR BLACKWOOD'S LAST LETTER TO HIS SON WILLIAM.

THE family by this time had come to the eve of those changes which are involved in the growth and development of sons and daughters. The young men, both of independent mind and character, though owning the authority and influence of the head of the house with a natural duty and subordination always beautiful to see, were taking more and more part in the management of the business, and preparing unconsciously to assume, as was so soon to be necessary, the entire management of affairs. Mr Blackwood himself was now (1830) a fresh and lively man of fifty-four; according to the evidence of his portrait, looking older than his age, but still ruddy and hearty, with strength unimpaired and vigour unbroken, notwithstanding all his labours and anxieties. His business was flourishing, his beloved

'Maga' triumphant, with a circulation and a reputation unequalled, and there was now no longer any prudential reason to restrain expenditure or to be content with the humble housing of early days. The first step towards larger living and extended business was the acquisition of new premises in George Street — the familiar "45," which has now for more than half a century been the symbol of the Blackwood headquarters to all the immediate supporters of the Magazine. George Street was then the pride of Edinburgh, which every new inhabitant agreed in desiring to make one of the most imposing and architecturally correct of streets—sweeping in a broad and ample line from the dome of St George's, admired by everybody, to the width and greenness of St Andrew Square at the other end. Mr Blackwood's account of the handsome new premises, with the classical façade which was the admiration of all beholders, is full of gratified feeling and something of the elation of a new beginning:—

W. Blackwood to his Son William.

29th April 1830.

Our two houses in George Street are very nearly finished, and they make quite a new feature in George Street. If I can I will enclose you a sketch of the front view of the premises. The interior is also very elegant. Your uncle's backroom is about 40 feet in length by 30 in breadth. Ours is upwards of 26 feet square, and both are lighted from the roof. I cannot, however, but feel something at leaving No. 17; but we will be much more comfortable in George Street, and I hope do as well as we have done at No. 17. Your Mother and Aunt were over yesterday to see the premises, and were very much pleased. We will be at a greater distance from this; but I would not like to leave Newington, for, looking out from the parlour

window this beautiful warm morning, the fine green fields never appeared to me more beautiful. It is quite refreshing to look over to Liberton and Craigmillar. I think with myself what I would give to have you sitting with me enjoying the prospect. I hope, however, my dearest Willie, that you are in the meantime happy, and in the possession of many blessings. Above all, I expect, while you are cherishing thoughts of home, you are constantly improving your mind by reading and reflection. This is the true resource for all our separations, and by steady application I have no doubt of your success in all that you undertake.

The Magazine is still going on flourishing [he adds]. In this No. you will see a letter on Indian matters. It is written by Mr G. M'Killop, who is living here. He has called two or three times, but I have always happened to be out. The 'Noctes,' you will see, are as amusing as ever. . . . Captain Hamilton's book is a most excellent one, and is praised by everybody, but it has not sold as rapidly as I expected. However, it is not like a novel, the sale of which is soon over, for it is in regular demand, and I hope will continue to sell.

13th June 1830.

We opened our new premises on Friday, 28th May. They are very much admired by everybody, and we feel so much more comfortable in them, that I am sure we have made a most advantageous change. . . . It was very odd that Mr Lockhart arrived here a few days after we went to George Street, and when the last of the shelving, &c., were taken out of No. 17, he was passing, and was the last of our friends who was in the old place. He is gone with his family to Chiefswood (to be near Sir Walter), and will remain there all summer. Hogg came to town last week. He is quite astonished at our new place. He says it "is ower grand." The Professor and he, with Mr Macnish from Glasgow (the author of the articles in 'Maga' signed "A Modern Pythagorean"), and Mr Aird (author of "Buy a Broom," &c.), dined with us on Thursday, and remained till near 2 o'clock in the morning. I never saw the Professor and Hogg in such force and spirits.

Other steps of progress were quick to follow. Mr Blackwood had made a sort of song of praise to leafy

Newington, and the house in which all his children had been born, and so much of his happy and active life had been passed, in the above letter which announced the removal of his business headquarters to a larger place. Once more he had dwelt upon the freshness of the air, the green spreading fields before his windows, the tranquil and pleasant prospect, which would have been perfect had but the absent son been there to look out with him towards Liberton and Craigmillar. But the young people in the house were no doubt pressing towards a wider life, nearer the centre of all that was going on in Edinburgh; and the head of the house had to yield, if perhaps with a sigh. To those who do not know Edinburgh, the description of the new habitation as "west of Moray Place" will give but little information. What was then the fashionable quarter of Edinburgh, stretched along the sunny side of the ridge which is crowned by George Street. I do not know whether Fashion has now moved on farther west, as she is apt to do everywhere; but the squares and crescents and connecting lines of streets in this quarter still form a city of palaces, ample and lofty houses in all the solidity of grey stone, which, if in their pseudo-classicalness and unbroken lines they incurred the severest strictures of Mr Ruskin, yet, in their large comfort within and the wonderful panorama before their ample windows, might have silenced almost any other critic. For their windows commanded the broad Firth, the soft shores of Fife, the distant lines of dreamy hills retiring into the blue, and all the never-ending charm of sunshine and flying shadows which gives a special beauty to the Scottish landscape —except, let us allow with humility, at those moments

when a not uncommon easterly haar, or the prevailing grey to which these islands are subject, sweeps every beauty away.

You will be surprised when I tell you that we are actually going to leave Newington, and have let the house to a Dr Andrew for three years, who gives us £80 of rent. The house will be well taken care of, which was a great inducement to us to let it. We found the distance sadly inconvenient for Alex. and Robert going to George Street after dinner; and besides, we had not room enough, as we are to bring Tom and Archie home. We have taken a capital house in Ainslie Place (No. 3), which is immediately to the west of Moray Place. I am not sure if it was built when you left us. It stands quite on the top of the bank immediately above St Bernard's Well, and has a beautiful view over to Fife, the Forth, and all the country betwixt. The garden behind the house opens to fine walks, which are made on the sloping bank above St Bernard's Well.

The new house brought with it other changes—a carriage with "a beautiful pair of small-sized horses, perfectly matched and thoroughbred," the first use of which was to convey Mr Blackwood on a "jaunt," long projected, to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs —of which there is a pretty description,—and many other enlargements of living. In the meanwhile, William in India was progressing too: he had gone through his first probation with quiet success and the general esteem of all around him. Whether Dr Frederick told him of his faults, as his mother desired, or his father's sedulous counsels brought forth the good fruit which is not always granted to the prayers of the most pious parents, it is evident that the young man's fine qualities had found the fullest recognition. He had scarcely attained his majority when the appointment of adjutant of his regiment was asked

for him by his commanding officer, Colonel George Frederick Moore, an officer of the highest reputation, who had greatly distinguished himself in Indian warfare. The request fell upon willing ears. Lord Dalhousie, then Governor-General, of whose favour Mr Blackwood had already assured his son in several letters, hastened to grant Colonel Moore's request in the most gracious terms. "He was most happy," he replied, "to have the opportunity of serving him, and hoped to do much more for him." Nothing could be more gratifying to the father at home, whose fondest wishes thus began to be fulfilled.

At the same time, the brothers at home were on the eve of the most important changes. The new *régime* which was about to commence, began to take form in Scotland as in India. The news of Willie's promotion had not yet reached home when another piece of news was communicated to him by Robert, whose anxiety to know what his next brother thought of the new arrangement shows how strong was the family bond between them. Perhaps there might be a thought among the elder brothers that Willie might reflect how much better was their position, amid all the enjoyments of home, than his in the dusty regions of Barrackpore, a subaltern, so strongly urged by every available means to cultivate his mind and live on his pay.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother William.

2nd March 1831.

My father proposes to make a change in the business, the whole stock to be valued and the business to be divided into six shares, my father to retain four, Alexr. one, and me one, Alexr. and I to pay my father interest on the share of the

stock. My father retains, as you may suppose, all the power in his own hands, and can dissolve the copartnery when he likes. The whole is drawn up by a Mr Fisher, who, I daresay, you did not know, as my father was not acquainted with him when you left this. He is a very clever man, quite a man of business. The contract is not yet signed, but will be soon. Write me what you think of all this, as I am very anxious to hear that you approve of it. My father's affairs are in a very prosperous state. The sale of the 'Magazine' is increasing every month; we now sell upwards of 8000.

This arrangement was not carried out for some time. So long was the delay, that Robert again wrote in June 1833, nearly two years later: "I wrote to you a long time since that my father intended to give Alexander and me a share. Nothing, however, has been done yet; but I trust it will be done soon." What Willie's opinion was we are not told.

Meanwhile public events occupied much more place in the record. The destruction of the country which the Reform Bill must inevitably bring; the stagnation of trade which was its immediate effect; the triumphant career of 'Maga,' always true to her principles whosoever might "rat" or be carried away by the tide; and the conviction daily growing in the publisher's mind, and in which he was supported by so much independent testimony, that there was no influence in the country so strong and serviceable on the right side,—are all very clearly set forth. Two numbers coming out in one month, eagerly consumed by all parties, and a circulation which, notwithstanding that the Magazine took the non-popular side in the most pronounced manner, went on always increasing, gave very sufficient reason for Blackwood's elation.

William Blackwood to his Son William.

3rd Feb. 1831.

I can easily conceive what 'Maga' always will be to you. I am often surprised myself, when I get a number printed, to find it so good after all my doubts and anxieties; and when we look back to so many years, it is quite astonishing that it should so long have been carried on with so much spirit. This month, for instance, I have two numbers, and both first-rate. No other periodical could venture to publish two numbers in this way, and the public are always glad to see a double number. Ballantyne's paper, too, will interest you by letting you see all that is going on here.

The Town Council has occupied a good deal of my time, and I have had to take a very prominent part in it. Our Provost, Mr Allan, has disappointed me a good deal, and I have had to oppose him again and again, but we continue good friends. In his anxiety to please all and be excessively popular he has frequently got into scrapes.

You will have seen by the newspapers that the Duke of Wellington's Ministry has been succeeded by Lord Grey's. This is a strange change of affairs. 'Maga' has kept on her own course, cutting up both sides when they deserved it, and consequently her independence has preserved her character and influence. The change of Ministry therefore has been no loss to us.

7th April 1831 (from London).

You will see by the papers what a disturbance there has been about this Reform Bill. It will, I fear, be carried, and no one can say where it will end. I am very glad I was not at home when the Reform Illumination took place. Our Provost acted most foolishly. Alexr. did not light the windows above the shop in George Street, and they were all smashed. Even your uncle John's windows, though lighted up, were broken. Your aunt Thomas had no candles in her windows, and several of them were broken. Ours at the house, however, escaped.

30*th July* 1831.

If I were to enter upon political matters fully I should have

to fill several sheets, but this I cannot attempt. I hope you get the Journal regularly, and you will see by it the revolutionary changes that have been going on. Ballantyne, you will see, has ratted like the rest, and become a Reformer. 'Maga,' however, has remained staunch and true to the good old cause, and even our opponents give us credit for honesty and consistency. Our sale has in consequence been steadily increasing. Independently of the articles for the last twelve months being on the right side, they have shown more talent and power than any we have ever had. This month we have two Nos., and one of them is almost entirely political. In the other No. there is a very splendid poem by the Professor, one of the best he has ever done. Read it very carefully, and you will be delighted with it.

You will see by the Journal what disturbances we had here at our election of our member of Parliament. It was very fortunate I was in the Council this year, as otherwise the Whigs would have carried the day and returned Jeffrey. I had a terrible battle to fight, but did not suffer in the cause, except that the windows in George Street were twice smashed; but the public had to repair them. Alexr. and Bob were enrolled as special constables, and had the pleasure of exercising their cudgels and batons with right goodwill several nights on the heads and shoulders of the Radicals. For a good many weeks the town was in a sad ferment, but it passed away and all got cool again.

24th Oct. 1831.

This cursed Reform Bill has caused a dreadful stagnation in every kind of business for the whole of the year. There never has been so slack a year in our trade ever since I have been in business. Had it not been for the Magazine we should have had nothing to do. 'Maga' has, however, carried on triumphantly, and the sale and popularity are as great as ever. This cannot be said of almost anything else. What will be the end of this Revolutionary ferment no one can say. Lord Grey and his Whig Ministry have raised such a ferment in the minds of the lower orders that it will be a long time before it can subside, even if the House of Lords and the well-disposed part of the

people stand firm. I am vexed at being obliged to continue to send you Ballantyne's paper, for he is turned quite a Reformer; but there is no choice, as almost all the papers have gone the same way. The Magazine, however, will enable you to get at the truth, and you will probably have an opportunity of occasionally seeing the 'Standard' and 'John Bull,' which continue quite staunch.

I have continued in the Town Council for another year, in order to expose the Radicals, and wait to see what will be the upshot of all this confusion. Learmonth (the coachbuilder) is our new Provost. I might have had it if I had chosen; but your mother, you know, hates anything connected with the T.C. I am just old Bailie and Admiral of Leith. I have a good deal to say in the Council from knowing the business better than most of them, and from being more accustomed to speaking.

Mrs Blackwood, we fear, did not much like anything which took her husband away from the domestic circle, and still less those civic enterprises which led him into expense as the proposer of many reforms in the internal economy of the city, as well as the staunch opponent of so-called reforms outside. But his account of public business in Edinburgh—the dinners at which he spoke, the effect which he produced, whether by half-facetious toasts or serious propositions, and by the exercise of that gift of speaking which few of his brother bailies possessed—has full record, and is always lively and amusing. The excitement of the time, in which every man's windows who did not obey a popular impulse had an almost certainty of being smashed, had the effect of drawing people who held the same opinions very closely together. We hear on one occasion of a dinner-party at home, at which the Professor met Mr Smith, hatter, and Mr Brown, jeweller, and the

festivities were kept up (as was usual) till two in the morning; while at the same time a copy of the following letter from the Duke of Newcastle was sent across the seas to prove that in all classes 'Maga' met with the same enthusiastic commendation. The Duke had called on his way through Edinburgh to thank Mr Blackwood for the noble fight 'Maga' had fought for the good cause; which civility had been repaid by a special despatch of the next remarkable article, to which this is the reply:—

Duke of Newcastle to W. Blackwood.

CLUMBER, *Dec.* 23, 1832.

SIR,—It was very kind of you to think of me in sending the article about to appear in your next admirable Magazine. I read the article with extreme pleasure. I read it aloud to my family still further to confirm my children in the principles which it inculcates, and to incite them to actions worthy of them. I never read anything better suited to these extraordinary times. I agree in every syllable written, and in none more than where you exhort the Conservatives to be firm and undeviating in their principles, to determine upon what is right, and to let nothing on earth move them from the assertion and maintenance of what they conceive to be just and right—above all, to be single-minded, doing good for good's sake, and not for what we may gain of place or power. It is this filthy lucre, this selfish lust for the good things of this world, which has ruined and debased the generality of mankind, and robbed us to bankruptcy of high-souled, patriotic, and Christian statesmen. There *must* be an expurgation before good can triumph over evil, and virtue dominate, ruling with the safe reins of *sound* religion. I have inserted *sound*, for the sham religion of the day is perfectly horrible, and is the genuine parent of atheism.

Would you like me to send you a print of myself, which, tho' they say it is not like, is the only one of me; at the same

time, I would send you a little thing which I wrote several years ago without a name.

With many thanks, and my very best wishes, I remain with *esteem*, yours very truly, NEWCASTLE.

It is curious to find how popular enthusiasm, in almost every case, is met with enthusiasm of opposition as great as that which carries a revolutionary movement through: which must be very bewildering to those to whom the voice of the people is the voice of God. The "unanimous hero-nation," alas! is not always certain to be right: but when it is but an uncertain majority, what are we to say? Meanwhile all sorts of meetings on both sides went on.

W. Blackwood to his Son William.

27th January 1833.

This vile Ministry by their revolutionary measures are ruining the country. There never has been such a year of stagnation since I have been in business. Our business has felt it more than any other; and had it not been for the Magazine, which still keeps on flourishingly, I do not know what I should have done. The Reform fun has abated, and people are now beginning to cool, but God knows what will be the end of all the mob excitement which threatens to outrun everything. You would see in Ballantyne's paper and the 'Courant,' which I sent you, a full account of our splendid constitutional meeting last week in the George Street Assembly Rooms. Professor Wilson astonished everybody. This meeting had a prodigious effect. I had a principal hand in getting it up; and all the previous meetings of the Committee preparing for it, as well as those after it for sending away the petition, were held in my large room, copies of the petition also being with me, for signature, so that for a month the room was like a Cried Fair as they say. Alexr., Robert, and I were also constantly occupied.

Yesterday I dined at the Hall with the Royal Company of Archers, along with the Lord Provost, &c. Sir John Hope of Pinkie, the Vice-President, was in the chair. The Earl of Dalhousie is President, and his health was given by Sir John with great feeling, and was received with the most enthusiastic cheers. Should you have any opportunity of seeing Lord Ramsay, you might tell him that I never in my life saw such a strong and warm expression of feeling pervade a large company.

9th Feb. 1833.

Booksellers were never worse off in my recollection. 'Maga,' however, has gone on triumphantly, and while everything else has been falling off, we have been increasing both in sale and in reputation. The articles on Reform and the French Revolution have excited great interest, and you will have read them, I am sure, with great satisfaction. They are written by Mr Archibald Alison, Advocate, who is not so much known as he deserves. I am printing just now a work of his, a 'History of the French Revolution,' which I expect will place him at the head almost of our modern historians. The two first volumes, which bring the History down to the accession of Napoleon, will be ready early in April. I am also printing just now another book which I expect to be very popular, Captn. Hamilton's 'Travels in America.' He was there for upwards of twelve months in 1830 and 1831. And 'Men and Manners in America,' by the author of 'Cyril Thornton,' must excite a good deal of attention.

James Ballantyne died the other week. He has never been well since his wife's death about four years ago. He has left a son and three daughters. The son is about 16, and the printing business is carried on as formerly, his brother Alexr. being a partner. You will now see a gradual change in the way in which the Journal is conducted, for my friend Mr Aird, author of 'Christian Characteristics,' as well as several articles both in prose and verse in 'Maga,' is now the editor, and will make the Journal a moderate Conservative paper. It will be some time, however, before he gets into the proper way, and indeed it would not be prudent to do too much at once.

2nd Sept. 1833.

There is a tremendous contest all over the country, but the Tories have roused themselves, and I would fain hope we may yet muster a strong body of Conservatives in next Parliament. 'Maga' has fought a glorious battle and done an infinite deal of good. The articles on Reform and on the French Revolution have opened people's eyes to the danger of revolution and mob government. In this No. we have a political 'Noctes' which tells many home truths in a half-jocular way, and will cause a great stir. In it you will see a few of the political songs of which we have circulated a great many: they are sung and hawked through the streets, and have annoyed the Whigs most grievously. It is very singular they have not been able to do anything of the kind against us. The tables are quite turned, for nowadays we have all the wit, fun, and talent on our side of the question. They feel very sore at this, and begin to tremble at the power which they know the Tories can exercise if they chuse, as having nine-tenths of the wealth and property of the country in their hands, so that we can concuss not a few Radical shopkeepers and noisy demagogues. The eyes of the mob, too, are beginning to open and see the tricks of the Whigs, so that the Radicals are now abusing the Whigs more than the Tories. The Radicals have set up a silly person of the name of Aytoun, a briefless advocate, as their candidate. He has no chance, but we have made good use of him in our attacks on the Whigs, and great numbers of his voters will go over to Mr Blair in preference to Jeffrey, and still more in preference to Abercromby.

'Maga' is going on as flourishingly as ever. This cursed Reform measure, which has put a stop to everything else, has not injured 'Maga,' but rather given her a stimulus as the great organ of the Conservative party. Tait, the bookseller here, has attempted a Magazine by way of rival to mine, and of course it is as much Radical as we are Tory. It has been announced and trumpeted forth by all the Whig and Radical papers for months before it appeared, and was to put down my Magazine completely. So far from doing us the least harm, it has done us a great deal of good.

I have republished the 'Physician's Diary' in two very hand-

some volumes, and I have already sold upwards of 1000 copies. This has been a most popular series, and done the Magazine a great deal of good. It is quite astonishing even to myself to find that month after month we are able to carry on 'Maga' with so much spirit, and to give such a variety of papers of interest as well as novelty.

I am most happy that you stand so well with your commanding officer, and that he has such a wife and daughters. Society of this kind will be of the greatest use to you. I do not know anything that operates more beneficially upon young men than the society of well-informed virtuous women. They have a much nicer tact than men, and their company polishes as well as purifies the mind.

The above letter is the first indication we have of another change which was about to take place, one which affected the family, and above all the tender and affectionate father, who still continued to be the spokesman of the house, with mingled feelings—joy in the joy of his son, mingled with a certain pathos of disappointment, the subdued expression of which will go to all parental hearts. The brave and gentle young Adjutant had already taken his place in the society which circled round the Colonel's house before that officer's pretty young daughters arrived in all the freshness of their English breeding and complexions at Barrackpore; and "the society of well-informed virtuous women," which his father, a guileless Chesterfield, had so encouraged him to cultivate, had become by this time something very different from that elegant method of self-culture, in the experience of the young man, still, as every prudent person would say, too young at twenty-four to enter upon the more serious developments of life. Marriage is primarily one of the things which proves itself the merest folly

or the highest wisdom according to its results; and as it happened, this was one of the golden examples which make all prudential rules unnecessary. Emma Moore, the eldest daughter of Colonel Moore, was of an excellent stock, and had come straight from the tranquil and refined atmosphere of an English rectory to the gayer life of India, where it was her fate to encounter immediately the young Scotsman approved of all men, her father's right hand, a popular and successful officer with every hope of advancement and success. William Blackwood the second, the "Major" of after days, was my own first friend in the family, and therefore it is with a natural prepossession that I collect the early incidents of his career. His grave, kind, mild countenance, his modest aspect, always with that special courtesy and gentleness of the soldier which adds a grace to good breeding, are clear before me as I write. The absolute absence of pretension, the kind simplicity of manner, which distinguished him in middle-age, no doubt made him in his youth a very attractive figure among his comrades, and it does not seem that the wooing was very long a-doing. One reference in his own letters to the arrival of the Miss Moores, which called forth his father's sage counsel and approval of the society of well-informed and virtuous women, and a rumour more disquieting of the rapidly apparent growth of the mutual attraction, are all we find until the following charming, yet slightly tremulous, letter, opening all that father's heart:—

William Blackwood to his Son William.

EDINBURGH, *2nd May* 1834.

You can easily conceive what feelings your letter of the 7th

November called up in all our minds; but of this you may be assured, that the predominant one was an anxious wish for your happiness, and a fervent hope that the most important step which you must already have taken would be a blessing to you both here and hereafter. Natural repinings we cannot but have, that while we had so confidently hoped in a year or two to have the pleasure of taking you in our arms, the prospect of this is so indefinitely postponed as it now must be. Your mother of course feels this more than any of us, but she joins me most warmly in wishing your wife and you every happiness and blessing which your near and dear connections can bestow.

On Thursday last uncle Robert and Mrs Steuart called and told us they had a letter by a Liverpool ship from Henry, in which he said it was reported you were to be married to the daughter of your Colonel; but though they had a letter from Dr Fred at the same time, he did not notice it. All this was immensely canvassed among us, and we waited patiently, as we could not receive any letter from you for two or three days. Accordingly, on Sunday (as usual), Sir Francis's packet arrived with your letter and set all our doubts at rest. By the letter which I wrote you while we were at Inveresk, and which you would receive some months ago, you would see what your wise brothers thought of your entering into the married state, and that I, on the other hand, did not think unfavourably of it. Your letters were read with the deepest interest, and while some were more or less on the matrimonial side, all sympathised with your feelings.

I have again and again read your letters, my dearest Willie. From all that you say of her, no doubt but that the partner you have chosen is most worthy of your choice. Had you been placed in different circumstances, and had there been time and opportunity to have consulted me before giving your affections, prudence would have dictated to me to point out to you the difficulties you must encounter by marrying so young when your means are so small. All this, however, you have considered and laid your account with. Having such a responsibility upon you, I trust you will make every exertion to be on your guard against unnecessary expenses, and I hope your steady conduct will procure you by-and-by some other appointment, so as to

give you more means for securing a competence. Your wife too, I feel confident from what you say of her, will in her own sphere do all in her power to assist and encourage you. . . .

A lover's picture must always be *couleur de rose*, but there is so much truthfulness in yours of your Emma that I feel assured of her being all-deserving of your attachment, and that you have been fortunate in securing her affections. Persons of calmer temperament than I would tell you you have been very imprudent, and so perhaps I should, but I have entered into all your feelings, and can easily conceive the struggle you must have had. You have now high calls upon you, and I fervently hope you will steadily obey them. With such a family as Colonel Moore's appears to be, you will have a domestic society that will leave you nothing to desire elsewhere. His conduct to you has been most proper and like a father. He must think well both of your head and heart to intrust one so young and so unprovided with his daughter's happiness, and I trust you will in all things prove yourself worthy of his confidence.

I had almost forgot to tell you that Johnnie says, "It will be a sad shame if we have not a bride's-cake on this occasion." Perhaps your mother may gratify him when we receive your letter telling us of the happy event. He thinks it will not do for him, now that you are a married man, to write you a parcel of nonsense. You may therefore expect his next epistle to be a very grave and proper one.

This was, I think, the last letter ever written by William Blackwood to his son in India. It is one on which no comment is necessary. Its kind and gentle wisdom, its self-restraint, its subdued pang of deep disappointment, yet tender and full sympathy with the feelings of the lover and bridegroom, raise its sober prose, so unadorned and real, to the height of poetry. Much is added about the congratulations of uncles and aunts, all greatly excited by the news, to whom it was instantly communicated in the first whirlwind of family feeling — and something of the

progress of business, and especially of 'Maga,' which filled the father's heart with hopes of being able to add to the comfort of his children after him,—"which is my only desire in this world," he adds. It is almost a consolation to the reader to know that nothing could have changed the course of fate; and that even had Willie returned from India at the end of the ten years which they had calculated upon, a period now indefinitely prolonged, he could not even then have seen his father again.

We will add a few scraps of lighter matter, chiefly from the letters of the brothers, before closing this chapter of the family history, which, better than any description could have done, reveals the household, living, from their own lips. Going back a year or two, we find Mr Blackwood himself giving amusing descriptions of his experiences in London on the annual visits which he made, now always in company with one or other of his elder sons. We do not venture to quote the record of a dinner at Lockhart's, in which the company was Murray and Maginn, and a discussion between the publisher and that true son of Grub Street gave a lively termination to the evening. At another dinner, in the house of another publisher, it is remarked as a most unusual fact that "the wine had only passed round four times when tea was announced," a piece of stinginess which made the entertainer's son "perfectly ashamed of him"! There was another dinner at the Mansion House "with our countryman Sir Peter Lawrie, who is the second Scotsman who has been Lord Mayor, when a great many acquaintances were met and some of the first rank." Meanwhile at home there are many festive and some amusing records.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother William.

I dined with Hastie yesterday at the annual meeting of the Six-Foot Club. It was a very pleasant meeting, but not equal to the year before, at which Sir Walter presided. He made very funny remarks, which I don't know that [you] ever heard, in giving Belzoni, the late traveller, as the tallest man of his acquaintance, he being 6 ft. 6. A son of Sir John Sinclair interrupted him—

"You are wrong there, Sir Walter; my brother is 6 ft. 7."

Sir Walter turns round in his inimitable manner,—"I am very happy to hear there is so much living merit."

There is another very good joke of Sir Walter's. Pringle, the Lamb of the Chaldee MS., has been in Scotland lately, and was on a visit at Abbotsford. Sir Walter got very tired of him (he is a great *bore*—that is my own), and told Lockhart that he just turned the Lamb out to grass on the holm.

Do you remember Dr Dunlop whom we used to call the "Tiger"? He went, if you recollect, to Canada with Mr Galt. He was a great friend of Bob Hastie's when in India. He returned from Canada lately, and while here dined with us. It was a most jovial party, and we had a great deal of fun, keeping it up till 2 o'clock in the morning. We had Prof. Wilson, Peter Robertson, Sir Francis Walker Drummond, and several other friends of the Tiger's.

The following schoolboy performance gives a last merry glimpse into the full house, with all its different grades of youthful life, before the record comes to an end:—

John Blackwood to his Brother William.

13*th April* 1833.

I am now in the Rector's class, of which I am 27th dux my first year, so that I get a tea breakfast. But every morning when I take my seat Bob begs leave to know the reason that he is to have the pleasure of my company to breakfast this morning, but when I say, "You forget that I am in the Rector's class," it silences all remark, and I am allowed to take my

breakfast in peace. Janet has got all her mother's and aunt's phrases, and uses them on every occasion—as, for example, she was trying, along with Archie, to make my bed, which when Archie was doing rather handlessly Janet says to me, "That laddie's want of common-sense just vexes me."

We have got a little pup [adds Johnny], which Bob, out of a piece of slyness, christened *Tory*, which has had the desired effect of gaining my Father's heart.

Tory continues still to be the invariable name of one of the abounding dogs in every Blackwood household. The household joke of its invention ought to add a kindness to every shaggy bearer of the name.

CHAPTER XVI.

ILLNESS AND DEATH.

MR BLACKWOOD VISITS LOCKHART IN LONDON—"AS FRIENDLY AND AS SATIRICAL AS EVER"—HOGG'S ANECDOTES OF SIR WALTER "A BUNDLE OF LIES"—A SUMMER PASSED IN SUFFERING—ALEXANDER AND ROBERT "MEN IN MIND AND CHARACTER"—THE SUFFERER'S LAST HOURS—TOUCHING LETTER FROM LOCKHART: MR BLACKWOOD HIS "FIRST EFFICIENT FRIEND AND HELPER IN LIFE"—THE PROFESSOR "STANDS BY THE BOYS."

William Blackwood had now arrived nearly at the end of his laborious and dutiful life—a life so checkered with excitement, so weighted with anxieties and cares, so full at once of the difficulties of a leader, the responsible head of a daring and anonymous regiment, always ready for mischief, and those of a man of business, compelled to make provision for many hazardous undertakings, that his energies were overstrained and his strength exhausted when the crisis came. He was only fifty-seven—comparatively young, as we reckon age in this long-lived generation—when his fatal malady began to creep upon him. During the last four years of his life the labours which he had so long met single-handed were softened to him, as has been seen, by the work and support of his sons,—Alexander becoming more and more the right

hand of his father, with much of the instinctive critical insight and divination of the tastes of the public which form the genius of the publisher—while Robert developed into a keen man of business, and in his different fashion promised equal usefulness. The father was thus able so to arrange the framework of his undertakings, though all-unconscious of the necessity of such a proceeding, that it was possible without breach or convulsion to carry everything on, and continue as he had planned it even when his presiding judgment was no longer there. No greater reward could have been accorded to a man so deeply devoted at once to his work and his family; and above all to the beloved Magazine, which was to him something like a princess committed to his care. It was, however, in complete unconsciousness that all these arrangements were made, the young men even chafing a little that the plan of the partnership was not more speedily carried through.

In 1833 Mr Blackwood went to London for the last time, taking Robert with him, who, curious as it seems now, paid then his first visit to the great capital at the age of twenty-six. Blackwood was still in full vigour, as the narration of their proceedings on their first arrival in town, their calls right and left, from the regions of Albemarle Street and Piccadilly to distant suburban wilds in which dwelt the contributors whom, after Murray and Cadell and other potentates of the Trade, it was their mission to see. There are in these letters repeated allusions to Lockhart, always the faithful friend of 'Maga' and the publisher, loyal to both, and never quite losing the sense of exile, which made a whiff of the atmosphere of the

North always delightful to him. The following is an interesting record of one of these interviews, one of the last in which two men so closely connected with each other during one period of their lives had a personal meeting. It was before Lockhart had undertaken the great work which has made his name illustrious.

W. Blackwood to his Son Alexander.

LONDON, *April* 19, 1833.

We sat nearly a couple of hours with Mr Lockhart, and had a great deal of talk with him. He is just the old man, as friendly and as satirical as ever. He gave us a most ludicrous account of some interviews he had had with this fellow Mr S. —Cochrane's partner. This worthy, you know, has announced a Life of Sir Walter Scott, and told Mr L. he had got a number of his (Sir Walter's) letters to Constable which he intended to incorporate in his work. Mr L. made him aware that the law would entitle Sir W.'s executors to get an injunction to prevent them being published without their consent. This, however, Mr S. did not at first believe, but he soon found Mr L. was right. Their next interview—and this is the best joke of all—was to consult Mr L. with respect to a large MS. which he had received from his friend Hogg, containing anecdotes of Sir Walter. Mr L., knowing well what a bundle of lies it would be, at first declined to look at it, but Mr S. pressed him so much that he opened the scroll. The first page he glanced at contained such abominable things that he could not restrain his indignation, but poured it forth upon Hogg in such unmeasured terms that his poor auditor was dumbfoundered. He, however, left the manuscript for Mr L.'s consideration. He went over it, and filled with utter disgust not only at the lies on every page, but the bad feeling displayed in mentioning the three Dukes of Buccleugh, Scott of Harden, and many others, and speeches of Sir Walter and Lady Scott [concerning them?] in the most offensive way possible. He therefore returned the MS. with a note saying he could give no opinion upon it. I had almost forgot to tell you a very curious part

of the affair: though all in Hogg's own handwriting, it is given as if it were written by Mr S., and he takes good care to speak of himself in the most laudatory way as the excellent Shepherd, the original genius, &c., &c., and Mr S. is supposed to write down the remarks of this son of genius. One atrocious lie Mr L. was able to detect from his own personal knowledge. Hogg details to Mr S. at great length an interview he had with Sir Walter on his last return from Drumlanrig, when, he says, Sir Walter called on him with Miss Scott. He makes Sir Walter pay him the most extravagant compliments, and exalt him far above any poet of the age. And this is all pure fiction, except that Sir Walter did call, and Mr Lockhart was with him, not Miss Scott. What a fortunate escape we have made in not having anything more to do with Hogg, for he would have been an eternal torment.

Mr Blackwood was taken ill very shortly after his return from this last journey. Some local disturbances of a trifling character seemed for a time to account for the symptoms; but the first serious examination seems to have convinced his doctors that the disease was incurable, and that nothing was to be done but to alleviate as far as was possible—so much less than can be accomplished now—the pangs of the sufferer. His letter to his son William on his marriage, quoted in the previous chapter, must have been very nearly, if not quite, the last important letter from his hand, and no utterance could have been more worthy of the writer, or more consolatory to the son whose kind and loving correspondent thus fitly ended his fatherly advice and blessings. The whole of the summer passed in suffering, in varying hopes and fears, during which the young men kept everything going, carrying every day's report to the bedside, where, ever cheerful, master of himself through all

these agonies, the patient bore so brave a front as almost to deceive the anxious watchers beside him. His old friends rallied round him with a faithful affection, which was an honour to both parties, each knowing now, without veil of doubt or cross of temper, how complete had been their mutual trust and union. Lockhart, always true, himself by this time inured to trouble, is the completest in his anxious inquiries, and the attempt to give a moment's pleasure to his old friend. The following letters show his affectionate solicitude :—

J. G. Lockhart to W. Blackwood.

LONDON, *July* 22, 1834.

I was distressed some days ago by a letter from poor Galt, in which he mentioned that you were not in your usual state of health, but young Murray has assured me that a friend of his, recently arrived from Edinburgh, has told him the ailment was local and of no importance. I would have written ere now to inquire of yourself or Alexander (where the Professor is, I know not), but expected to be able to make my inquiries in person about this time. Now, however, I find I shall not get away from the great Babylon until the middle of next month, and therefore I put you to the trouble of an epistle, tho' I have nothing to put into it except my own anxious hope that the answer may confirm J. Murray's statement, and that when I reach Auld Reekie I may find my good and much-regarded friend much as I have been used to see him under his own hospitable roof. If when I am in Scotland, which will be, I believe, for about 6 weeks, I can make myself of any use to you, so much the more agreeable will it be for me. I think, when the Parliament is once up, I should like to write a political Noctes; but really I have no courage to propose intermeddling with that series when at a distance, for I feel that the Professor has expressed on some occasions a little soreness on that subject.

If you have left Edinburgh, which I half hope is the case, for some rural retreat and *restauration*, I conclude Alexander or Robert will read this, and I beg they will answer it, however briefly.

Thanks for your letter [Lockhart writes by the same post to Alexander]. Though you don't suspect this affair to be known here, the accounts I have heard from various quarters were rather more melancholy than those in your letter, painful, painful as that was.

I will not part with hope yet: your father has a vigorous constitution of body, and a mind that will give stout battle to any enemy. I shall hope and trust to see him weather this blast, and enjoy that calm and comfortable age for which his honourable and manly course of active life has given him so good a claim. But do write again, and the oftener the better, until I see you, which I think will be about the 20th of August. Meantime, if you can make me of any use in any way, don't hesitate; for I know the Professor is apt to be uncertain at this season in his motions, and believe his sanguine spirit will refuse to be alarmed as to your father, even tho' there should be, which God forbid, serious cause for that.

I have written to your father by this post a few lines. I need not say how deeply I participate in all your anxious feelings about both him and your mother. If it should be destined that we lose your valued parent *now* — early as the day will seem—it will be a great consolation to me to reflect that it will find you and Robert men in mind and character, and able to sustain the important duties devolved on you. God bless you all.

A touching return to the old habitual themes is in the next letter which Lockhart wrote to his dying friend. He had loved the news from London, and all the details both of literary and political proceedings; and still more the minute criticism of any article in the Magazine which formed the staple of his own correspondence with that closest inner circle. To these

subjects he clung still on his deathbed, always interested in any detail.

J. G. Lockhart to W. Blackwood.

I have been disappointed at not hearing from yourself [Lockhart writes on the 18th August, from town], but Alexander has been kind enough to give me a few lines, from which I hope I may conclude that your disorder begins to yield to good management. As he assures me that your general health is firm and your spirits fair, I that know the strength of your fabric, both mental and physical, will not entertain any doubts that in a few weeks I am to see you quite yourself again. I was delighted with the last 'Noctes.' There never was a better or more lively and ludicrous picture drawn than in all the earlier part of it, and there is also a vast deal of real shrewd good sense, observation, and most biting sarcasm to boot. In Wilson's hands the Shepherd will always be delightful; but of the fellow himself I can scarcely express my contemptuous pity, now that his 'Life of Sir W. Scott' is before the world. I believe it will, however, do Hogg more serious and lasting mischief than any of those whose feelings he has done his brutal best to lacerate would wish to be the result. He has drawn his own character, not that of his benevolent *creator*, and handed himself down to posterity—for the subject will keep *this* from being forgotten—as a mean blasphemer against all magnanimity. Poor Laidlaw will be mortified to the heart by this sad display. The bitterness against me which peeps out in many parts of Hogg's narrative is, of course, the fruit of certain rather hasty words spoken by me to Cochrane and MacCrone when they showed me the original MS., but nevertheless Hogg has *omitted* the only two passages which I had read when I so expressed myself,—one of them being a most flagrant assault on Scott's veracity, and the other a statement about poor Lady Scott, such as must have afflicted for ever her children, and especially her surviving daughter. Dr Maginn has handled Hogg in his own way in 'Fraser's Mag.': by-the-bye, I have only once seen the Dr since you were here—I hear from James Wilson that he *has* been conducting himself considerably better. I don't suppose he has

taken any step to wipe out his debt to you any more than to myself, and fear next Xmas we shall hear again of his being as bad as ever in money affairs. I was shocked to see Sir R. Inglis abused lately in the 'Age,' and find that topic handled to-day with grand fury by Alaric the Goth, in a thing called the 'Old England.' Talking of these small deer, our old victim Corny Webb, the Cockney poet, is now the *reader* of the 'Quarterly,' in Clowes's printing office, and a very intelligent one he is.

London is now utterly desolate—and the only thing that seems to excite any interest is Brougham's quarrel with the 'Times,' &c. This, I believe, originated in the discovery by Barnes that B. was privately giving his information to the 'Chronicle.' The 'Times' sneered at B. B. in his evidence before the Libel Committee brought out his scheme of taking off the newspaper taxes, and hinted at penny newspapers under the Diffusence Society's auspices. He has ever since been abused by Mr Barnes lustily; and now, behold "the Society for diffusing *Political* Knowledge" is announced. Nay, the companion to the newspaper is already published as *thesis*—and the 'Citizen' is to follow forthwith. We shall witness a hot struggle between these dear old allies in the cause of mischief. Nobody enjoys the prospect more than Thomas Moore, Esq., who has just been here and talking *conservatissime* on all points. I write on a very busy day, my last in London for 2 or 3 months. We go to Liverpool—thence by steam to the West Country—thence by-and-bye to Edinburgh, chiefly that I may see *you;* and then to Rokeby, where we shall graze as long as I find it convenient for me to be absent from Headquarters. I am now about to commence writing my Life of Scott, a heavy and anxious task, for which I have hitherto been collecting and arranging the vast mass of materials. *You* ought to have some memoranda and letters which would be of use to me. *You* were the publisher of several of his works, and it is important to have your views of him as well as those amply recorded by Constable and others.

Meanwhile the cheerful patient, one of those in whom Shakespeare's "merry heart" that "goes all

the way" was so well exemplified, lay upon his painful bed suffering those tortures which Science may have learned a little to alleviate but never to cure, while the unseen malady went on; still gathering his children round his bed, as sportive with the little ones, as much interested in everything that was occurring in the full household, as he had ever been, going through that dread ordeal with a brave front to pain and approaching death, doing everything to keep up the hopes and courage of his family, though himself well aware in what these agonies must end. There were eight of them round his bed, none absent but Willie, whom he now knew he should never welcome home again; and though it was a great thing to have the two young men—"men in mind and character," as Lockhart says—whom he had trained so carefully, to come after him and continue all his undertakings, yet there were difficulties in the task which he alone fully knew, which must have awakened many an anxious thought in the mind of the active head of the house who had hitherto held command of everything. How were they to guide the tribe of contributors who had seen them grow up, who called them by their Christian names, and had even helped to shape their development and careers? how were they to manage the Professor, a difficult task enough for all Mr Blackwood's own experience and *savoir faire?* how were they to steer through the narrow channel between Literature and Politics, to keep the cherished boat in trim and its course straight? These questions solved themselves with a wonderful ease which no one could have expected. But to the mind of the father steadfastly and cheerfully working through all those weary days

and nights of suffering it was a very serious one. The portrait of Mr Blackwood by Sir William Allan, which forms the frontispiece to this volume, proves that his many labours had so far told upon him as to make him appear much older than his age; but it seems never to have altogether pleased his family, failing to do adequate justice to his natural vigour and alertness, mental and physical, though it is probably a sufficiently faithful representation of his features and aspect; and its air of serene content was no doubt thoroughly true to his character and disposition.

There had been but little correspondence with India during that anxious summer. The father's always active pen was still; the family at home were paralysed by the hopes and fears and constant watching of the long illness. The bridegroom, on the other hand, was absorbed by his own happiness and the beginning of his new life, and unsuspicious of evil to come. Even his father's last letter, in which there was not a breath of anything but the cheerful fulness of the family life, unshadowed by any alarms, would not reach him until after that father had passed away. It was November indeed, some months after that event, when William Blackwood in India first took alarm from rumours which reached him through other sources, and wrote with anxiety, yet no prevision of the truth, to make special inquiries. "I fervently hope," he wrote, "that long ere this you may have been restored to perfect health, and anxiously look every day to receive letters giving me better accounts than I heard through Fred's letter." Meanwhile this dreadful suspense was increased by the miscarriage or delay of letters on both

sides,—accidents which, not very unusual then, seem always more apt to occur in moments of anxiety than in more tranquil times. Mr Blackwood had begun to sink early in September, and died on the 16th of that month amid sufferings happily softened by the benumbing hand which sometimes soothes before it strikes the final blow. It was not till the 10th of March following that Robert's mournful narrative reached his brother at Lucknow. The perfect simplicity and truth of this letter, and of that of Alexander which followed, place the mournful scene before us without an unnecessary word.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother William.

September 26, 1834.

In July I think it was I first wrote you that my father was ill. I was for the first time made aware of the danger on the 19th of June, but I had not lost hopes until the beginning of August, when I wrote to you upon the 6th. I had great doubts of doing so, but was afraid from the sensation my father's illness created that you might hear of it from other quarters, and as it has turned out, it was better. In that letter I gave you particulars of the uncommon disease. It has no proper name—it was a tumour; and what gave Dr Thomson so bad an opinion of it from the first was, that no cause could be assigned for its origin. His sufferings at first were very great; latterly, however, they were not, which was one source of comfort. I cannot say when he first became aware of his danger. Dr Thomson says he *knew* in June, but that his strength of mind kept him up. I think it was one week in June, the first: he had suffered a great deal of pain, and I sat up all night. He awoke about three o'clock, grasped my hand, and said, "Oh Bob, Bob, I cannot stand this long!" He could not say more. I was not aware of the danger myself at the time, so that it made no particular impression upon me. My mother is also of opinion that he was aware of his danger from the first. I am myself in great doubt

about it. He certainly did not think himself dying until within a fortnight or three weeks of his death. On Friday the 5th September he became seriously worse. On Saturday he saw Dr Lee (a clergyman). On Sunday about midday he rallied wonderfully, and continued better for the next three or four days. We had sent for the Professor, who was in the country, and he arrived early on Monday. My father saw him that forenoon and conversed with all his usual cheerfulness. Mr Lockhart arrived on Thursday night and saw my father on Friday. It seemed to give him great delight seeing Mr Lockhart and the Professor. On Saturday he was evidently weaker, and the breathing for the first time affected seriously. On Monday it was evident things were fast drawing to a close. About ten o'clock at night we got him to take some morphia, which seemed to compose him. I left the room a little after eleven to lie down on a sofa, but was called at twelve. I thought at first he was asleep, so calm and composed, and at ten minutes to six on the Tuesday morning he was no more amongst us. The blow, though so long expected, did not fall the less severely upon us, and how much more severe, my dear Bill, upon you, who have not had that warning. My mother has borne it with a fortitude truly surprising; but I cannot express it better than you will have it in Dr Lee's letter to yourself.

The funeral took place on Monday last. Sir Frances Walker Drummond, Mr Forbes of Culloden, and some others wished to make it a public funeral; but this, on consideration, we declined. We invited 280 people of all classes. So generally was my father known, that even this large number did not include all we should have invited. About 230 attended, and nothing could exceed the solemn stillness which prevailed. Isabella, who was upstairs, says she never heard a sound in the house. Dr Lee asked the blessing, and alluded in very striking terms to my father's many great qualities. He described his departed friend as one who, amid the turmoil of the nation, was uniformly found first in the defence of Religion and Order. Mr Clason, our own minister, returned thanks. Every one who was in the house accompanied us to the burial-ground on the Calton Hill, and all remained, at least so I am told. I only recollect, on

turning round with the rest of the pall-bearers, of seeing an immense mass of people all uncovered. The pall-bearers were our six selves, my two uncles, and Professor Wilson, who was more affected than I could have thought possible; indeed all along he has shown the utmost anxiety.

Alexander adds to these details a still more touching note :—

I can scarcely tell whether my father was aware of his situation or not, as he never spoke directly on the subject. When he spoke to me on the Monday week before he died, it was of me without reference to his leaving us, and the same to the others. He introduced it by saying that my own ill-health must at times have made me think very seriously, and he seemed to reproach himself with not having impressed more on the minds of us all the necessity of paying more attention to our religious duties. I could say little indeed at such a moment, but the little I did say gave him satisfaction, and he made me awaken my mother that he might tell her so. But he never spoke of his leaving us, and said it was the happiest morning of his life, and that *we* would be all happier than ever. God grant that it may be so, but at all events I will not forget that morning and the feelings to which it gave rise.

Even the Whigs being turned out [says Robert] has in some measure been a cause of sadness—all our friends coming to George Street wishing each other and us joy of the deliverance.

Our saloon is the place where Tories most do congregate. Their loud cheerful voices and merry jokes we had all as we used to have, but there was one wanting.

The first of these letters was not received, as has been said, till March. It was answered with reverence and tenderness. "I cannot hear too much or too minutely of all the events attending our father's last illness," says the absent son :—

William Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

LUCKNOW, 12*th March* 1835.

All the details you give have affected me very strongly, but still it affords me great relief hearing everything connected with the last days of such a father. There are many alleviating circumstances, as both you and Alexander say—above everything, the cheerfulness with which my father held up to the last, and the faith with which he met his death. We will all, I am sure, cherish his memory as one of the best of parents, and the respect for his character and abilities evinced in the general regret at his loss may well excuse our looking back to them with the strongest pride and admiration. Dr Lee's letter has afforded me the warmest pleasure possible under such melancholy circumstances. I hope you will assure him of my gratitude.

William Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

No circumstance connected with our dear father's last days, you may be sure, can ever fail in interesting all my feelings most strongly. The testimonials of regret for his loss which you sent, and the other similar tokens you mention, are very gratifying, more especially to me here separated from you all, who have nobody who, from knowing my father, can fully enter into my feelings. Emma is all to me I could desire or expect, but how I do wish she had known our father! We feel very anxious about our mother and Isabella. I feel confident in all of you doing all in your power to raise and cheer their spirits, and by the healing influence of time and religion. I fervently hope that before this reaches you they may be restored to such health and spirits as we all most affectionately desire and expect.

I enter most warmly into all your and Bob's feelings about the Magazine and the business. I can well suppose you must have many an anxious thought on the subject for some time to come, but I look forward with good hope to your being able to carry them on successfully. You will no doubt often feel my father's loss in the management of the Magazine, but with the support of Professor Wilson and our father's other friends I feel

great confidence. Often, often must you both feel great anxiety on the subject, yet you will have to cheer you the recollection of how often our father himself felt the same (as I well remember), and yet what triumphant success crowned his exertions, by his ever having kept up his spirits and exerted himself to the utmost, though to people of less energy it would have seemed useless. I fervently and confidently hope that ere you have received this you will have found your difficulties lessen, as you gain further experience and become accustomed to rely on your own judgments. As long as Professor Wilson continues to support the Magazine as he has done—and of this I feel little doubt, both from regard for my father's memory and for yourselves, as well as from the pride he must now take in the Magazine—I think you need never fear the want of other contributors of talent. 'Maga's' reputation is now so high that I hope and think truly she will never want the support of men of talent. Believe me, my dear brothers, I shall ever look to its continued success, and that of all your other concerns, with the greatest interest and with affectionate hope and confidence.

These family communications are almost too sacred to be mingled with the murmur of outside voices. But these repeated but one note, that of honour to him who was gone, and faithful friendship to his young successors. I had intended to add here a collection of the letters received from every side, conveying the anxious wishes of so many friends at a distance, who made haste to communicate to the young men their grief, their praise so sweet to survivors, their sorrowful appreciation of the friend whom they had lost. Such tributes, however, cannot but be more or less monotonous, and space prevents the accumulation even of the honourable testimony of which there is so much, and which indeed will be unnecessary to the reader who has followed the course of William Blackwood's life, and seen the terms of real alliance

and union which subsisted between him and the many eminent men by whom he was surrounded. Lockhart, one of the oldest friends of all, must again be the representative of these innumerable voices. No one could be more completely acquainted with the object of his panegyric. They had known disagreements, they had differed in opinions even on the most trying of subjects—the literary merit of the writer himself who now rendered with such fulness the funeral honours to the dead. Most of the existing contributors to the Magazine were but the growth of a day in comparison with the early champion—the impetuous young writer who had brought his friend into so many scrapes, and on occasion quarrelled with him and made friends again, and left him and hankered after him with all the force of that certainty of mutual understanding underlying every superficial sentiment which can only exist between old friends. He knew of whom it was he spoke if ever man did.

J. G. Lockhart to Alexander Blackwood.

EDINBURGH, *Sept.* 17, 1834.

I regret much to leave Edinburgh without again seeing you and your brother. Indeed nothing but my duty to my own old father, who is now travelling, for him, a long journey to meet me this day at Milton Lockhart, could have induced me to go away before your father's funeral. In lieu of my attendance on that occasion, I shall transmit to-morrow a small tribute to my excellent friend's memory according to the Professor's request, and I hope it may be satisfactory to your feelings and those of the rest of the family, to all of whom I beg to offer my sincerest sympathy and condolence. I had a great deal of talk with the Professor, and perceive that he has a world of solid, good advice to offer you when the fit season has arrived for returning to the cares of business. If on any

point or on any occasion my opinion or counsel, or in as far as my at this time pressing engagements may permit, my pen can be of any avail to you, I hope I need not say they and all my energies are at your disposal; for I shall never forget that in your father I found my first efficient friend and helper in life, and must always continue to respect and cherish his memory in the persons of his children, who will, I trust in God, walk in his honourable steps and maintain his well-won name.

I quote the following from the brief tribute above referred to, to the founder of the Magazine, which was published in the next number, that for October 1834. This saddest issue of 'Maga,' brought out under the very shadow of the funeral, was the one of which Mrs Gordon tells us that her father, Professor Wilson, wrote more than the third part (52 pages out of 142 pages) in the two or three days following Mr Blackwood's death. The two friends who began with him thus stood by him until the edge of the grave.

Death of Mr Blackwood.

It is expected, we hope without presumption, that the habitual readers of this Magazine will hear with regret that he to whom it owed its name and existence, and who for seventeen years superintended all its concerns with industrious zeal, is no more among us. Mr William Blackwood died at his house in Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, on Tuesday, the 16th of September, at 6 o'clock A.M., in the 58th year of his life. His disease had been from the first pronounced incurable by his physicians. Four months of suffering, in part intense, exhausted by slow degrees all his physical energies, but left his temper calm and unruffled and his intellect entire and vigorous even to the last. He had then what no good man will consider as a slight privilege—that of contemplating the approach of death with the clearness and full strength of his mind and faculties, and of instructing those around him, by solemn precept and

memorable example, by what means alone humanity, conscious of its own frailty, can sustain that prospect with humble serenity.

It was no sudden or fortuitous suggestion that prompted him to take up the enterprise in which he was, ere long, so pre-eminently successful as to command many honourable imitators. From an early period of its progress, his Magazine engrossed a very large share of his time; and tho' he scarcely ever wrote for its pages himself, the general management and arrangement of it, with the very extensive literary correspondence which this involved, and the constant superintendence of the press, would have been more than enough to occupy entirely any man but one of first-rate energies.

No man ever conducted business of all sorts in a more direct and manly manner. His opinion was on all occasions distinctly expressed; his questions were ever explicit—his answers conclusive. His sincerity might sometimes be considered as rough, but no human being ever accused him either of flattering or of shuffling; and those men of letters who were in frequent communication with him soon conceived a respect and confidence for him which, save in a very few instances, ripened into cordial regard and friendship. The masculine steadiness and imperturbable resolution of his character were impressed on all his proceedings, and it will be allowed by those who watched him through his career as the publisher of a literary and political Miscellany, that these qualities were more than once very severely tested. He dealt by parties exactly as he did by individuals. Whether his principles were right or wrong they were *his*, and he never compromised or complimented away one tittle of them. No changes either of men or of measures ever dimmed his eyes or checked his courage.

To youthful merit he was a ready and a generous friend; and to literary persons of good moral character when involved in pecuniary distress he delighted to extend a bountiful hand. He was in all respects a man of large and liberal heart and temper.

The great tower had fallen, the great overshadow-

ing tree no longer protected the house. It is one sad result of the world's experience that we have learned to say, No man is indispensable; but there are few people of whom it could be less believed than of William Blackwood. The prosperity and position of his family were all of his making; but he had not lived long enough to leave a large fortune behind him, and there were still four boys to be set out in the world, and many family cares to be transferred to the young shoulders all unaccustomed to bear them—besides the delicate and extended machinery of the Magazine, never yet trusted to any hands but his own, which was the chief stay of the house. If Wilson is to be trusted, it had already suffered in his long illness. "Nobody writes for the Magazine, and the lads are in very low spirits, but show much that is amiable," the Professor says. He himself, as they all felt, was their chief hope. He had indeed put his shoulder to the wheel in order to get out that October number. But this was precisely his character. He was never inaccessible to a generous impulse, a man for an emergency, capable of doing a piece of superhuman work when his heart was touched; but were they likely to get from him the steady support, the backing up, which alone could give them confidence? "As long as Professor Wilson continues to support the Magazine, . . . you need never fear," said William in India; and this seems to have been the universal sentiment. With so active and all-efficient a husband taking the strain even of the family correspondence off her shoulders, Mrs Blackwood, though in no way wanting

in strength of mind, does not seem to have taken any part in the responsibilities of life. It was perhaps less usual in these days. She was the critic of all its larger actions, rather than the active head of the house; but this did not lessen the solicitude and alarm with which she regarded the great crisis of affairs. Miss Isabella Blackwood has told me of the anxiety with which her mother regarded "the Professor" on the first occasion of their meeting after the great change. She said nothing, but remained looking on anxiously so long as her sons were present; but in their absence seized a moment to speak a hurried word of appeal,—"Oh, Professor, you will stand by the boys!" It was not an appeal to which a man so impulsive and emotional could for a moment be deaf. He replied eagerly with unbounded promises of faithful help and service. And there is no doubt, from the many expressions of gratitude which are to be found in the letters of the brothers, especially in those of Alexander, giving him repeatedly the credit and thanks due to their mainstay, that he kept these promises. But this did not make the wayward man of genius change his nature, and all the features of the struggle which had gone on between him and their father—nay, which Alexander himself had been cognisant of when during his father's absence he had kept twenty pages blank to the last moment, putting in type all the rest of the Magazine, for the Professor's contribution—were present to the minds of the brothers even when most assured of his excellent intentions and affectionate interest in themselves and 'Maga.' There

does not appear, however, to have been any failure among the contributors generally. All were eager with promises of help and support to the young men thus left, which was the worst privation of all, with no practised and experienced judgment behind them to take upon their own young shoulders the entire burden.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BROTHERS.

THE YOUNG HEADS OF THE FAMILY—THE FIRST HOUSEHOLD DIFFICULTY—ALEXANDER IS OBLIGED TO WINTER ABROAD—JOURNEYINGS AND ADVENTURES ON THE CONTINENT—A MEETING WITH WORDSWORTH AT MILAN—JOHN LEARNS THE PUBLISHING BUSINESS IN LONDON—THE DETESTED BLUE BAG AND "COLLECTING"—ANOTHER CADET FOR INDIA.

I DO not know a more admirable picture than that presented by the Blackwood family after the death of their excellent father. "Our six selves," says Robert, with unintentional pathos, in the simple narrative of the death and funeral which required no charm of language to make it go to the very heart of his correspondent. Six sons stood round the father's grave—the eldest twenty-eight, the youngest a child of eleven. The younger ones had still to be trained and cared for and put out in the world according to their father's intentions; but this is an office which but few young men care to take upon themselves with all its responsibilities. It would have been but natural had Alexander and Robert secured the freedom of their young manhood, having already, as nobody would deny, abundance to occupy them in the business and that Magazine which

required such incessant care. They had reached an age when few young men nowadays remain within the echoes of nursery and schoolroom in their father's house; and as there was no want of money, nor even of a competent manager of the household affairs, they might have seemed to fulfil all their duties had they done no more, from the ease of their own independence, than stand by their mother in the charge of their younger brothers, and given her their advice and backing up. But this was an idea which never seems to have occurred to these young men. The glib, general talks about "unselfishness," when brother or sister accepts any special family duty, which is so common nowadays as almost to discredit that quality, was so much too small for the necessity in this case that it never seems to have occurred to any of the family that the position was remarkable or praiseworthy. They went home as naturally to the house from which the natural head and ruler had gone, to take his place and fulfil his duties, as if there was no other course to be thought of. And it would not appear that they had ever entertained any other thought. The house had now a double head—the two young men acting, so far as we can see, in perfect concord like one, especially in all the family matters, which they accepted as a matter of course. In the business proper they had their different departments — Alexander, the more literary; Robert, the more energetic and enterprising in all things connected with the trade. But when it came to be the younger brothers that were in question, the two were as one man—carefully talking over, consulting about,

the varying fancies of the boys, as one changed his mind and another developed inclinations and tendencies which decided his career. The position of a brother fully taking up his place as head of a house is always, I think, a fine one, even when exercised with a little natural carelessness, as so often happens. There is something generous and noble in a young man's exercise of such a charge. But there was nothing careless in the action and feeling of these two young men. They had very soon occasion to show themselves and their temper and feeling in this respect, and the reader will see how admirably and simply they took up their father's part.

I must add that there was none of the sentimental self-abnegation of a virtuous hero about either of them. They carried on the history of the family with the same perception of the humours of the house as in their father's days, with all the favourite family jests over Jamie and the Doctor. They were no Puritans. Mr Blackwood's household, where, though the guests sometimes sat till two in the morning, it was never forgotten that an elder in the Kirk and a ruler of the city had special decorum to preserve, had been a very regular and well-ordered one. The young men now often kept late hours: they were gay among their friends. I hardly know whether I ought to quote a very touching habit of the house of which Miss Isabella Blackwood told me; yet it is so simple, natural, and pathetic that I cannot omit it. The mother, like so many mothers, had dreadful thoughts in her lonely soul, no longer supported by her husband's sense and knowledge of life, of the things young men might be doing when they

were out late at night, and came in "at all hours"; and as she lay trembling in the dark and silent house, left the door of her room open that she might have the satisfaction at least of hearing when they came home, and a rule was made that the last to come in should shut this door. But Love suspicious and fearful had another Love close by sympathetic with both sides, and to another member of the family it became intolerable that the boys should be thus fettered and the mother so suffer. Isabella watched too in the silence till all was hushed from garret to basement, and then she stole out and shut the anxious mother's door.

I remember speaking to the same faithful survivor of what was the saddest hour in life when her companions and playfellows were gone. Was it the morning when one woke to remember all that happened? was it the evening when one sat alone? "Ah, no," she said; "what I think of is when they all came in before dinner, their voices sounding through the house, and lights in every window, and the boys driven out of the drawing-room with many a laugh to get ready for dinner." Those who know will understand how deep was this perception, and how the remembrance of the laughter and many dim lights in every window, the sound of the familiar steps and voices at every turn, the anticipated pleasure of the evening, the ring of a whistle or a song from the chambers where "the boys" were preparing, cuts deeper than many a more serious memory to the heart.

It was not very long before the young heads of the house were plunged into the anxieties incidental to

their position. The elder of the young band, Jamie, always cheerful and full of genial self-confidence, was settled for life in the profession he had chosen, that of an Edinburgh W.S., and thus off their hands. Tom, the fourth brother, had been to all appearance provided for also; but he did not like the office in which he was placed, and was not content with his prospects. Perhaps it was the Indian fever which had got hold of the lad's mind, for India was the great object in those days of every youth, at least in Edinburgh, who was eager for fortune and success. Many fathers, and we suspect most brothers, would in such circumstances have made short work with Tom. He would have been sent back summarily to his office, and bidden to content himself with what his father had selected for him. It would even appear that Robert had for the moment an impulse of impatience. He describes this first household difficulty to his brother in India, after relating how the family had changed its residence to Great Stuart Street from Ainslie Place—a house "quite as good, but not quite so expensive." "You will be anxious to know what we are all doing," he says.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother William.

EDINBURGH, 17*th March* 1835.

Alexander and I, as I before wrote, have the business, and I am happy to say that the Magazine, which is our sheet-anchor, has not fallen off. Should it go on prosperously, in the course of a few years we will be able to clear ourselves from all encumbrances. I have no fear that with the Professor's advice we will be able to conduct it in a way to satisfy the public. In the parcel of books which go by the vessel from Greenock there are copies of all the letters received from our principal con-

tributors, by which you will see, from the very eloquent and affectionate terms our father is spoken of, the high estimation in which he was held by all. James is getting on well: his apprenticeship will be out in twelve months. His master, Mr Horne, says he never had any apprentice in whom he could put more trust, and that he has given him entire satisfaction. Mr Horne is the Duke of Buccleugh's political agent, and at the last election in January carried the Duke's men in Roxburgh and Selkirk. Jim had the charge of sending away the voters in Edinburgh, and a most important officer he was. He had to get up every morning for a week at four o'clock to get them away in the coaches: some of them were slippery, so he had a race or two to get hold of them. How you would have laughed to see his imposing air when he drove up in his chaise! These Writers have no mercy upon their unfortunate clients: our friend walked as little as he could.

I am sorry I cannot give you so satisfactory an account of Tom. My father placed him in an Insurance Office, where he is learning the business of an accountant. He has been nearly two years at it, but does not like it, and is quite dissatisfied. We pressed him to say what he would like better. He either did not know what he would like or would not tell. We asked him if he would like a cadetship; he said he did not know, but daresaid he would.

The doubtful youth who does not know what he would like is so frequent a figure in a family that, many will sympathise with the elder brother in this first problem of their new responsibility. Every iron was immediately put into the fire to get a cadetship for the only half-satisfied youth, at much trouble to his elders, and Robert goes on with his family history:—

John is to be a bookseller. It is what his father intended, and what he wishes himself. We have not fixed when he is to go to learn his business, but think of sending him to London for two or three years, if we can get a good house to take him

for that time; but it is difficult, as they only take apprentices for five years. Alexander will arrange this when he is in London. Archy does not point at anything yet. We wished him to continue "the Doctor" [his childish nickname], but he does not like the dissecting-room: if this is all his objection, I think he may get over it; it is one of the best professions.

Robert's next letter gives an account of Alexander's visit to London about Tom's cadetship, and how, in consequence of Lord Ellenborough's crowded lists, and the excitement of a Ministry just tottering to its fall, it failed—along with a kind offer from one of the many Hasties to take him at once as manager of one of the indigo or silk factories which they possessed in India, with excellent prospects of advancement, which, "after the most mature consideration and entirely of his own accord, as I did not press it, Tom has accepted." "I hope to God all will go well with him," says the elder brother, "as I am very anxious, and feel the heaviness of the charge much." Thus their minds were relieved of one anxiety; but the same letter contains the distressing information that Alexander had been very ill with asthma,—"suffering more from it," says Robert, "than anybody I ever heard of except old people," and for some time laid up and unable to write. He recovered sufficiently a few days later, however, to write to William, who, they both hoped, would be able, notwithstanding the distance that separated them, to keep a brotherly watch over Tom when he arrived in Calcutta, with a more genial account of the lad, and one of the most prepossessing kind.

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother William.

25th June 1835.

You will very soon be able to judge of Tom's character if you get down to Calcutta, as I hope you will; but I think it right to tell you that his abilities are excellent, and, as far as we can judge, admirably suited for a man of business. He is the most correct and methodical person possible, excellent at overlooking and keeping servants to their work, and is the most obliging boy I ever knew. He is naturally shy and reserved, but he only needs to be known to be liked; and is so handy and orderly in all his proceedings, that it is a pleasure to have anything to do with him. He was most attentive to my father during his long illness, and was invaluable as his principal nurse, and I assure you I have lately found the advantage of his attentions during my harassing illness. At his age experience of the world is rare, but this he will soon acquire; and though he has had little opportunity hitherto, I think his natural sagacity will soon enable him to judge accurately and act for himself. But it will be a great weight off our minds if we know that you are soon to be with him.

William in India was no less ready to assume what responsibility he could, and to pledge himself to watch over the young brother, at least by frequent correspondence if no more. In the meantime he had entered into responsibilities of his own. His first child was a little girl, who died. But he hastened with pride to intimate to his mother the birth of his eldest son, the first heir of the name in the third generation, and now, after many years, the head of the house, his grandfather's successor and representative. This announcement gives us a pretty picture of the little household far away at Lucknow, where all the links of affection were so strong, and the new family circle, which was to be as abundant and as united as the old, was now

begun in all faithful adherence and loyalty to the old traditions. The young man's heart—he was still only twenty-five—overflows with happiness and gratitude for the safety of his Emma in the first place, about whom he had been anxious. "The Nurse and Emma say," continues the young father, "that the baby is a remarkably fine stout little fellow; and *I* believe he is, but I cannot myself give an opinion now."

William Blackwood to his Mother.

LUCKNOW, 16*th July* 1836.

He is to be called after my dear father. Emma has readily and affectionately yielded this, for I did feel as if it were unkind perhaps my asking it, as I named our poor Janet after you, which I hear now, according to the usual custom, I should have left to Emma. But I do recollect so well what my father used to say about any man's passing over his own father in the name of his eldest son, that even were my own feelings less strong on the subject, I would not have done it. He is to be a great man like his grandfather, Emma said, and I am sure my most fervent wishes for him could not hope more than that he should be like my father.

This old-fashioned duty of giving the grandfather's name to the child has gone much out of repute nowadays, when all the research of young parents is directed towards the discovery or invention of pretty or picturesque names, thus cutting short the family succession of Williams and Johns with appellations which may be sweeter to the ear but destroy the traditions of a house. Yet it was certainly wrong, and very grasping on the part of the young father, to take the girl's name as well as the boy's from his own family—a step which, however, does not seem to have been resented, for here is a very pretty sketch:—

I was rather surprised to hear that John was to be a bookseller, as I had no idea that another was to be brought up to the business. Archie, I think, must continue the Doctor. Their letters, which I got late last night, delighted me exceedingly; they both write very well indeed. Johnny's letter is really capital. Emma read it aloud this morning with such spirit and emphasis as did the epistle full justice, enjoying it and everything with him most heartily.

I cannot tell whether the following letter was that read aloud by the pretty young wife in the happy moment of recovery, always so engaging and touching, to the husband who found her spirit and emphasis, and her interest in his unknown family, so delightful. But it is a good specimen of the journal letters which the young Blackwoods wrote, and its boyish, careless lightheartedness brings us back with a stride to the household at home, beginning to hold up its head again after its sadness, where all except the mother were so young and full of hope. Mrs Blackwood had been persuaded by her family to leave home for the first time to visit an old friend. She would not go to the familiar Carfin, "where she had been so often with my father," but she was induced to make this less trying visit. The girls went with her; but Johnny, it appeared, the only boy now at home who was free to move, had been kept in doubt as to his fate. The following performance is headed boldly—

JOHN BLACKWOOD'S JOURNAL DURING HIS STAY AT CARFIN.

Note.—John went with his mother in the carriage as far as the Railway, while she went on to Gartloch, Mr Robertson's, where she remained 10 days.

Monday, 24th August 1835.—This morning I got down to

breakfast for the first time for these eight last days. I hardly expected to get away to Carfin to-day, but from some vague anticipations I put on a pair of Christian-like trousers. At breakfast it was determined I should go with the rest at nine o'clock. We baited the horses at Linlithgow: the woman was particularly assiduous in showing us about the palace, evidently to give her a chance of 18d. After much searching we hit upon the road to Mr Robertson's, and I left the carriage when we crossed the railway. I got to Carfin all safe, and found all well there, Archie's appearance affording me great comfort, as he showed plentiful signs of good living.

Then follows a record of wet days, sadly destitute of amusement. "As we were rather dull, we set Mary and Bessie to fight with the pillows, which afforded us a vast of amusement." They then went to fish in the Clyde, where "my usual success attended me. It was a bloodless victory."

Friday.—This morning Archie and I determined to go to Hamilton. When we announced our plans to Mrs Steuart, she said she wished Archie to dine early, as there was to be company at dinner, and she did not think there would be room for him—a sad blow to the Doctor's dignity. But that was nothing to what fell to my share. "Johnnie," says she, "we'll make a gentleman of you"!!! I wonder if she knew it was John Blackwood who attended the Senior Humanity Class of the Edinburgh University during last session she was speaking to.

Sunday.—It was fixed after breakfast that we should go to Bothwell, and as they had no regular preaching either there or at Dalziel, we should go to a Radical conventicle held near the Bothwell Bridge. Now this is a thing that must be kept very quiet. See that the 'Scotsman' doesn't get a hold of it, as there is no saying what a handle they might make of it. I'll lay you in a few days there would be a flaming article headed, "Specimen of the vaunted spread of Conservative principles—the Wee Tory was seen," &c., &c. However, between the weari-

someness of the scene and the impulse of my principles, I did not honour the Macmillanite Conventicle long with my presence: his first sermon lasted about two hours and a half at least, I am told.

Meanwhile Tom had been accompanied by his brother Robert to London, James going with them, it being his first visit, which gave Robert "enough to do showing them all the sights — indeed I saw more than ever I had seen myself before." He found much encouragement in respect to Tom's venture, however, both from Mr Hastie and other people, "everybody whom I conversed with on the subject" assuring him that nothing could be better than the lad's prospects.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother William.

21*st August* 1835.

Indeed it was only this that would have induced Alexander and me to part with him, and the feeling that if he did not go he might miss the opportunity of doing well in life. You may conceive that he was himself, poor fellow, dreadfully overcome at parting with us all; but it was only the parting, he assured us, as he was anxious to go. Both Alexander and I told him again and again not to think of it unless he was quite satisfied himself, and on getting there, if he saw no prospect of doing well, to come home at once, for as long as we had a home he had one to come to. . . . The ship came round on the Friday morning, and the captain told me he would sail that night, or early next day, and therefore to come on board at seven and take leave, which we accordingly did. It put me so much in mind of what you had written about parting with our dear father, that I was completely overcome.

. . . . . .

When Alexander wrote he mentioned that we were ready to pay you your provision under my father's settlement. As you may suppose, there have been a great many claims upon

us. The Magazine has done wonders, and we have been able to invest a large sum in the name of the trustees, as it is our anxious desire to put the provision for the young ones and my mother beyond the uncertainty of trade. We have allowed all my father's real property to remain in the hands of the trustees, and have paid off the bonds which were on the property here and the house at Newington.

William's patrimony had been increased by a welcome but unexpected legacy, and the condition of the family was thus one of general prosperity, the only drawback to which was the severe complaint which had now taken hold of Alexander, the intense suffering of asthma, which the family fondly hoped was not dangerous, but which alarmed them by the great weakness and many self-denials it involved. "Dr Alison," writes Robert, "who is attending Alexander, says the disease has not affected his system in the slightest degree, but of course cannot say what repeated attacks may do. At all events he must live with the greatest care—in fact, make an old man of himself, which is very hard on a person at his time of life." It was indeed a terrible prospect for a man of thirty, so capable of work, so much needed in it. It was resolved, however, that he should follow medical advice and spend the winter abroad, Robert remaining sole prop of the business, and acting head of the family behind. One does not know which to sympathise with the most—the elder, in all the force of his faculties, thus sentenced to banishment and inactivity; the younger, left to all the responsibilities of the business, above all of the Magazine, unaided. Neither, so far as the record goes, uttered a word of complaint save in sympathy for

the other. Robert's heart was heavy for Alexander, but he says nothing of the overwork and excessive strain which afterwards broke down his own health and cut short his career. The invalid was in tolerable health and good hopes when he started from home in August 1836; and the little expedition—which consisted, besides himself, of the merry-hearted Johnny all agog to see the world, in the frolic temper of eighteen, and Mr Hay, who had for some time contributed to the Magazine, chiefly in the way of translations from the classics, being an admirable and elegant scholar—was, on the whole, a very lively one, though subject to a shortlived depression when the chief member of it was seized and threatened by an attack. Perhaps the proceeding was a little irregular so far as John's education was concerned; but Mr Hay's function in the party was professedly that of tutor, and the youth's ambition was not scholastic, nor was that of his brothers for him. John became in great part the chronicler of this journey, which was conducted in the leisurely fashion of these times, so much better both for the invalid and tourist (who could afford it) than our rush of progress now helter-skelter over land and sea. It began unprosperously, by a bad attack of asthma on the journey by steamboat to London, where the invalid arrived exhausted and depressed by so bad a beginning. But this passed away in a few days, though it made the family so anxious that Robert came hastily up to London to ascertain the real state of affairs; which, however, contented him so completely that he wrote to his mother, "The attack cannot have been a bad one, as I never saw him looking better."

A few cheerful days in London made the cure complete—a brief period which is amusingly described by John to Archie, for whom there had come a letter which amused the elder brothers much. John describes himself as "just stepping out of our lodging in Holles Street (rather a swell place, by the by), when who should I see but the great Robert himself just alighting from a cab," which delighted Johnnie and did Alexander much good. London has ceased to be wonderful, we fear, in these days, but it was still at that time the most astonishing place to the unaccustomed visitor.

John Blackwood to his Brother Archie.

11*th July* 1837.

Well might uncle John call this an awfu' place [continues the young writer]; in fact, the extent of it is perfectly inconceivable, the continual drivers driving in all directions, you can't conceive where in the world they are all banging to—scores of cabs and busses about your ears, with drivers shouting, "Ceb, sir;" "Benk, sir;" "Cha'ing C'os Benk, sir." Hay seems to have written home that he is not in the least astonished. I can only say that he looks so any way, for he goes about the streets gaping, and I have heard at least of half-a-dozen of what he calls "the only thing that astonishes me." In fact, Edinburgh is a mere village compared with this endless place.

The youth went to St Paul's and Westminster, of which he says nothing; but Vauxhall he found magnificent. "It was a perfect blaze of light. There was tight-rope dancing, acting, harlequins, and every sort of performance, with immense crowds of spectators," and a most brilliant display of fireworks—very much, indeed, what it must have been, though so much later, in the days when Jos Sedley and his

party visited that brilliant scene. John gives his little brother also an amusing description of the clerk from Cadell's who guided them in search of lodgings, and "who was at particular pains to demonstrate to all the landladies that 'Hair' was the great thing for Mr Blackwood." He was also at the buying of a carriage—a great opportunity recommended to them by an expert—which was "foreign built and had been over all the Continent," and was "strong enough to carry us all over the world." "Mamma need not fear we have thrown money away upon it," he adds; "for this precious vehicle we only pay ten pounds!" In this the party jogged along, taking two days to reach Paris, which they did, according to Mr Hay, a true tourist, in all the flush of novel emotions, first through a district "very much like Scotland," and then through "a most magnificent country." We scarcely know how hackneyed that road has become and how familiar, till we see the impression it made upon the travellers sixty years ago; but, to be sure, it is the railway and the rate of fifty miles an hour which are in fault, and no doubt we lose as much as we gain.

Six days to Lyons! whither we rush now in a short night; and rain pouring, and the French cookery very unpalatable to the invalid, and the wine undrinkable! Alexander was not ill, but he was out of sorts, glad only to see that Johnny was enjoying himself, and finding in the cheerful but tender-hearted boy his only comfort. In Paris he saw no sights, being too tired and cold in the hopeless wet weather to venture out, and only found a stray contributor there, to discover that though his papers were clever there did not seem

to be much in him. What with the beauty of Fontainebleau and a good fire which he was able to have there, and a dinner which by some remarkable chance was *plain*, and included a dish which, though it had a very fine name, was exactly like one of "my mother's best rice-puddings," and consequently was "very refreshing," things became a little better as they jogged on. There were providential alternations of the cookery, indeed, at various points in the route. At Roanne there was found a cook who might have come out of Thackeray direct—a Mirobolast, but more pacific and light-hearted than that great artist—who declared that England knew not cookery in consequence of the general employment of women as cooks, the inferior sex never being able to comprehend the mysteries of *la grande cuisine;* but notwithstanding, condescended to prepare for the invalid rice and other such simple aliments. It is quite remarkable how many excellent hotels the travellers, though full of prejudice and finding everything French detestable, found on their route. Roanne, Port Royal near Aix en Provence, where a most jovial evening was passed, Aix itself, are all recorded as possessing inns worthy of the highest praise.

We fear the railways and the cessation of travellers posting leisurely about the country have made an end of these pleasant places of entertainment in France as among ourselves. I will venture to quote Mr Hay's account of the festive evening above mentioned. "I have not seen your brother more pleased with anything than with this adventure," he says. The party had travelled from Avignon through a terrible storm

of thunder and lightning, and Hay and John on the *banquette* had been drenched :—

Mr W. Hay to Robert Blackwood.

Our host was a jewel of a man, a dark-mustachioed, speechifying man—one who made long speeches and longer bills. We had a magnificent dinner prepared by a cook who had graduated at Aix, an artist of great skill. We soon found out that the whole domestics were musical. Observe, we were in the land of music, among the Provençals, and I do affirm that I never heard so many beautiful songs as during that night. We had the whole household assembled in the *salle-à-manger*, a long chamber, with a good wood-fire blazing within, and the lightning blazing without. The landlord, his son, and the whole of the household down to *Boots*—called in France *Le petit*—were crowded around a long table, at the head of which sat I clothed in a pair of breeks, a shirt, and Alexander's dreadnought coat, a picturesque-looking object. I plied them with brandy, which here costs nothing. *Le petit* was the Apollo of the party : he is an old bargeman, his name a misnomer ; his style of singing is very like Harry Watson's, but with far more execution. I gave them "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," and showed them, I hope, what roarers Caledonia produced. I translated into French the chorus, which they admired exceedingly. They have written out for us two of the songs, a French and a Provençal one—not one word of the latter do I understand. In the midst of our fun Mr and Mrs B—— arrived, delighted to escape from the tempest without to the gaiety within.

Alexander's account of these festivities is less enthusiastic, though he says "we had a capital evening" ; but it was a great pleasure to him when the other travellers came in and he recognised a friend. "He was as glad to see me as I was to see him, and I can tell you an Edinburgh face is a treat to me !" he says. He had several fits of asthma

on the road and a number of detentions, and, ill and weak, sighed for the quiet and affectionate ministrations of home. These ministrations were deeply appreciated by Mrs Blackwood's son. "I would have given a pretty penny for a sight of Mama's face!" says John on another occasion. "I often thought," he says, "what would Tom's sufferings be were he to have an illness and be waited upon by such savages as I had about me." The poor French waiters, no doubt kind enough and anxious to be of use, and the foolish village doctor, who wanted to apply leeches (though he himself, fearing inflammation, wished to be bled), were equally abominable in his eyes. It had been the intention of the party to push on to Rome, but they found so many difficulties in their way—for cholera was supposed to be on its march across the Continent, and there was a quarantine to go through at every frontier, while, on the other hand, the sea voyage from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia was too much for Alexander in his weak state—that he finally determined to remain at Nice for the winter. These were the days when Italy was subdivided into many territories. Nice is described as "in the Sardinian States," and in every way a very different *régime* existed. The little woodcut of Nice which is at the top of one of John's letters shows something not much larger than one of the many fortified villages of the environs—a little group of habitations between the Chateau and Cimiez, with a line of ancient walls still existing on the sea-front, where the tall houses of the Promenade des Anglais sweep round the bay. The villa in which they settled seems to have been on one of the lower slopes of the Cimiez hill, some-

where about St Barthelemé. It is amusing, in that now golf-haunted region, to recognise in the person of John Blackwood the founder of the national game, to which he was always devoted, on the Riviera. Sauntering in the garden one day, the gay but sometimes home-sick youth "attempted rather a novel edition of golf." "You must know," he says, "that our garden is covered with waste oranges. I took a few of the hardest and began putting them with a vine [stalk?], by way of a club, on a level bit in front of the house." He was interrupted by the comments of the old housekeeper from the window, whose "great burst of cachinnation at every miss I made at last fairly drove me off the ground." There is little doubt that this was the first time that ever man or boy "missed the globe" on these sunny shores. In May, along with all the rest of the English community, they left Nice half-regretfully, half-eager to depart, and, travelling slowly, drove along that lovely coast to Genoa—the description of the scenery being enthusiastic on the part of John, but tinged with the shadow of his illness in Alexander's account, who thought Musselburgh bay finer than the bay of Genoa. John compliments the streets in Milan when they reach that place, by saying that some of them were broad and fine enough not to be sneezed at in Edinburgh! Indeed their hearts were full of home and of the desire to be there. In Milan Alexander was ill with the heat and feverish, and longing "to see a Scotch face." But here the brothers had an encounter which gave a little stimulus to their flagging energies:—

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

Como, 21*st June* 1837.

I must not forget to tell you that we encountered Wordsworth at Milan. He stayed for two days at the same hotel, and the last day that I was able to be at the *table d'hôte*, he sat next me without my knowing who he was, as he never opened his mouth even to speak to his friend. I learned it by accident the last day, but he had started early that morning on an expedition to Como and did not return till late, and next day I was too ill to stir out of bed: but the day after I made Johnnie introduce himself, and he came in and had a long chat with me. How like he is to the man the Professor described! He inquired very kindly for the Professor, and spoke very feelingly of his great bereavement, and also of Mr Lockhart. I was terribly knocked up that morning, and had been obliged to change my bedroom for air, and he then delivered a disquisition upon asthma and his own travels,—for since he left England he has been to Rome and all over Italy, and enjoys travelling greatly. But if you had only heard him on the new Copyright Act! How he did expand, and for half an hour he did nothing but give me another edition of Talfourd's oration. He considers himself the author of the measure should it be carried, and that his works will be an immense thing to his posterity, which I trust they will. I confess I don't see that to authors in general this new Act will be much benefit; but it is at least just, and should be an advantage to booksellers. He set off for Venice the same evening, and for a man of sixty-eight in such hot weather it was a bold undertaking. He mentioned having seen you at Captain Hamilton's, and expressed great pleasure in knowing and being acquainted with us both. I gave him the second volume of Lockhart's 'Scott,' which I had just read, and he seemed delighted with the present, as he had not seen it.

John's more sanguine opinion as to his brother's illness at Milan was that it was rather to be rejoiced in than regretted.

I am perfectly convinced that this is the last despairing effort of the enemy, for if it had really been about him in its

ancient way, when could it have had a better opportunity for showing itself? He had a very bad cold, the atmosphere as choky as could be, and the thermometer in the cool room above eighty, but with all that he only breathed a little hard for fifteen hours, so I think you may rest assured that if the disease is not eradicated as yet, it is the very next thing to it.

These optimistic views, however, were unfortunately not verified. The brothers returned home to resume the usual tenor of life for the summer. But in winter again, or rather in the early autumn, long before it is now thought necessary to send invalids to the South, we find John once more beginning his report from a Swiss village where Alexander was again arrested by a violent attack of asthma. On this occasion, however, there being neither cholera nor quarantine to prevent them, the travellers got safely to Rome, travelling through Central Italy, and were able to get a great deal of pleasure out of their residence there. This time they returned by Germany, changing their route completely. Few letters of this year have reached my hands, and these few do not contain much that is characteristic. Though the expedition began badly, the invalid must have improved much, since they visited fully and with pleasure all the great Italian cities and many of lesser rank in the delightful leisure of the long drive, in which there was no hurrying, no clangour of trains, no need to start at any hour or on any day but that which suited them best.

Young John would seem to have completed his irregular but very effectual education by this grand tour. He had learned the modern tongues, in which young men, however well trained otherwise, were still

more defective generally at that period than they are now, which is saying much, and had seen a great deal of the world in both senses of the words—its most famous scenes, and a great deal of that varied and fluctuating, but sometimes brilliant, society which was to be found in the chief centres of Continental life at a period when a journey thither was not within the range of all men. It remained for his brother to place him, after so long a holiday, in a seminary of a different character, the dusky London warehouse in which it was their kind but stern conviction that a young man destined for business should receive his training for it. The travellers did not pause on their return to see any of the glories of the Coronation, which was just then turning every head, and most social arrangements, upside-down in London, but hurried back to the home for which, amid all their wanderings, they always sighed. But while Alexander rested and resumed his share in the work, chiefly in the management of the beloved Magazine (after which all this time he had sighed, the delays of its arrival through the sometimes careless Galignani fretting his spirit while he moved from place to place, and the discussion of its contents, though usually ending in the conclusion that each successive issue was "a capital number," filling his mind), the other and more active member of the firm, Robert, who had during these long absences cheerfully taken the entire work on his shoulders, assumed the charge of the younger brother, and within a few months went with him to London to settle him in his new work. Fresh from the luxurious journeys *en prince*, and all the amusing freedom and piquant society which he had enjoyed so fully, it

must have been no small trial to the young man to settle down, though his elder brother had done it before him, in the London bookseller's office, and find out by experiment how muddy were the streets, how heavy the bag, and how limited the horizon of the Trade, which his guardians thought it so important he should know thoroughly before entering into active work for himself. His recent experiences must have made this doubly unpalatable to him, and it would appear that a little brotherly suasion and exercise of authority were necessary to make him bend his shoulder to the burden. But it is one of the most remarkable features in this family, that the idea of rebellion against that which was settled and appointed by the natural authorities does not seem to have entered into any mind. The young man might emit a passing grumble, but revolt was unknown. It was in the office of Messrs Whittaker & Co., in Ave Maria Lane, that he was placed, a firm now no longer existent, and not an ornamental centre of the Trade. "I trust you will continue," his brother Alexander writes, "to find the people in Whittaker's pleasant and kind to you in pointing out your duties."

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother John.

EDINBURGH, 20*th Nov.* 1838.

Bob arrived on Saturday night, and from his account of the way you had both been feasted in London I am not surprised that the change to Williams's boiled-beef rooms has been found rather disagreeable. It would be as bad as the change from the Europa to the Lipri at Rome. However, you will soon get accustomed to find out the best joint and a good house, and live well enough.

The new number of the Magazine is pretty well on now, but I was rather afraid of it towards the end of last week, as the Professor would not begin, and Croly, Alison, and every one were later than usual with their articles. I am not sure yet what is to lead, and hope the Professor may do something, as we have left 24 pages for him at the beginning. Then we have the 2nd part of the "Onyx Ring," a paper on the state of affairs in the East and the designs of Russia, a review of Kenyon's poems by the Sketcher, a paper on Ireland cutting up the Whigs of course, a variety of small poems which the Professor intended to have made an article of by writing an introduction, but has instead given them "without comment" for our bases. We have besides a tale of White's, Mallalieu's paper on the French occupation of Mexico, and several other things, so that even although the Professor does nothing we have nearly the whole number in type. The Gaelic Dictionary is well sold at 9s., as are most of the books, to Tegg,[1] some of which, however, have gone a bargain. The lads for the last few days have been busy packing them, and the warehouse has got a good clearance. We publish the Agricultural Journal and Statistical Account this month also. You have not much printing going on in Whittaker's, I fancy—at least I see very few books advertised.

Bob tells us you had a bad cold when he left, and I hope you have got better of it, but do take care of yourself and remember that you have been accustomed to a warmer climate for some time. I was at the shop this morning till 3 o'clock, but found it almost impossible to keep aheat, and have just returned home as cold as possible, and will not be warm till I have had my dinner and a glass of wine.

The practical Robert, however, did not perhaps appreciate the wonderful difference between the Governor's balls and parties at the Embassy and all the gaieties from which John had come, and the dull routine of business into which his young brother

[1] The 'Edinburgh Encyclopædia' had been sold to Tegg some years before.

had now fallen, and his first letter to London was sharper in tone, permitting no regrets :—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

EDINBURGH, *Nov.* 29, 1838.

You seem to be pleased with everybody in Whittaker's, but allow me to say that your objections to collecting seem very childish, the blue bag being, so far as I can make out, the bugbear. Now I have never heard but one opinion, that collecting was the best way of learning the business for any one from the country. As to this person and that never having done so, I don't give a single farthing. They may be very sharp in selling a book, and from being in the business from childhood they may learn, but you are not in that position, having never been trained regularly. In addition to all this, you would know all the booksellers, and, not least, you would get accustomed to drive business through your hands, which is a great deal better than fiddle-faddling, chasing a book from one shelf to another. You are of an age, however, to judge for yourself, and I would be the last person to force you into anything you did not like; but I must beg of you to consider the matter very seriously.

We had a party at dinner yesterday, including the Professor and Frank. Just before dinner I asked the Professor, who said if he was in the humour he would walk up, which he did, and was in great force. It was a very pleasant party: a few of the choice spirits remained to supper.

We hear no more of any objection on the part of the young martyr thus suddenly transferred from the ministrations of the great Continental artists to "Williams's boiled-beef rooms." He seems to have accepted his fate with something very much like heroism. Alexander, in the tone of whose letters, when restored to home and work, the great difference is perceptible, a heartfelt content and satisfaction which nothing in his travels had given him, continued

to write, doing everything to interest the youth in the business into which he was suffering this disagreeable initiation. It does not appear that his asthma had been materially affected by his long and patient trial of other climates. One other journey, I believe, he made in company with his sister Isabella and some friends; but that, I think, was the last search after health he undertook, no doubt finding those comforts of home which he so much appreciated, and the wholesome work which he loved, better than the balmiest air when combined with the weariness of enforced leisure and the foreign circumstances to which he could not accustom himself. In the beginning of 1839 he reports to John—although he writes "by gaslight at mid-day, the cupola in my room being covered with snow"—that he is in tolerable health, and able "to go about like other people." His interest in his business communicates a glow of comfort to the sensible and cheerful letters, and must have done a great deal to strengthen the young brother, whose ties to him, after such close and long companionship, must have been doubled in warmth and force. That he was capable at the same time of giving shrewd business advice is apparent, notwithstanding that it is chiefly the softer side of his character which shows in his letters to John; and of this the following is a good example:—

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother John.

EDINBURGH, *December* 6, 1839.

I was glad to hear from Buchanan that the last number, which I was a little afraid of, had sold rather better than usual. The January number I shall be very anxious about the sale of, being the first of the year. Inquire particularly about it your-

self. It promises to be a good number, and a first-rate one if the Professor does what he promises, but as yet nothing is done by him. We have a very curious article by Neaves on old Scotch songs, the conclusion of the "Onyx Ring"—"Italy as it was," a lively amusing account of a Tour by Eagles, which will amuse you greatly. . . . Warren has sent a very good article on Eastern affairs by a friend of his, but I am not quite sure yet whether it will go in, so say nothing to him about it.

I wish you would quietly make yourself acquainted with the number sold of all the different periodicals, which you will easily do one by one at a time from the different collectors or clerks, and jot down what you hear from one party and what from another. By doing this you will come pretty near the mark. These things are always talked about by the different lads, and you may easily make out the truth without even appearing to ask questions. The sale of the 'Edinburgh Review' is greatly increased, and I suspect the 'Quarterly' is as much down; but Brougham's articles have given the first a great lift, and he is going on with them. Find out all you can.

We have four sheets of the new volume of Alison in type, and you will see it advertised in the new number. The work is being translated both into French and German. It is continuing to sell as well as usual, and the first volumes are again getting low in number. We are also printing a 4th volume of law in the shape of some hitherto unreported decisions by the late Baron Hume. I do not expect we shall make much money by it, but it should pay, and the other booksellers were all mad to get hold of it. Clark offered to publish it on lower terms than we did, but Lords Medwyn and Urquhart, who take charge of the publication, gave us the preference.

The results of John's inquiries into the sale of periodicals in London astonished the brothers in one point—the sale of 'Bentley,' which means, I presume, 'Bentley's Miscellany.' But there was then such a rage for Boz that anything with his name would sell. About the same time there is talk in one of Alexander's letters of sending back a bundle of prose

and verse mingled, written by Thackeray, who had published 'The Yellow-Plush Papers.' I believe it was the 'Irish Sketch-book.' The sketches were not in those days considered good enough for the Magazine. Besides business information the young exile in London sent an occasional anecdote to amuse his brothers :—

John Blackwood to his Sister Isabella.

STRAND, *January* 8, 1839.

I dined at Murray's on Saturday last: they were very kind. It was not a large party, being Fors, Welstead (Arabia), Parke, bookseller of Oxford, his wife, and another young chap. Parke went on about the Oxford divines until at last, to the horror of his wife and party, Murray burst out, d——g the whole set for disturbing the tranquillity of the Church."

This is almost the only reference to the movement which has been perhaps productive of more books than any other period of ecclesiastical history. So different is the aspect of the greatest series of events from different points of view. No doubt a very large proportion of slightly affected spectators throughout the country shared at that moment the sentiments of Mr Murray.

In the course of the next year it became necessary to decide upon the future of Archie, the youngest son of the family, the only one now of "our six selves," the boys that stood round the father's coffin, who remained to be provided for. He had long ago given up his childish choice of the medical profession, and though he had a temporary fancy for the law, that does not seem to have stood the test of a few sessions at the University of Glasgow, where he was probably sent for the advantage of a stricter dis-

cipline than could be applied at home, where the proceedings of the Benjamin, if a little idle, were still apt to be seen only from the comic side. It soon became clear, however, that strict intellectual training was not likely to be congenial work for the youth, and the family council reluctantly concluded, as so many a family council has done, that the army was his natural vocation. As soon as this was settled, Alexander took immediate steps to get him a cadetship if possible. It had been impossible in the case of Tom, which occurred at a crisis of political life when the Conservative Government was going out and unfriendly Whigs, who would not have held out a finger to help a Blackwood, were coming in. Now, however, matters were very different. We hear the result in a letter announcing the receipt of the intelligence of Alexander's success :—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

EDINBURGH, *8th June* 1839.

My mother and all of us were much affected and at the same time gratified by the manner in which your application was received. Archie was hardly prepared, I think, for its coming so suddenly, but he is quite satisfied, and is to begin with young Ballantine on Monday to study Hindostanee, to which I think he will apply himself with energy, now that he has a decided object in view.

A letter from Archie himself, full of generous boyish emotion, is written on the other side of the sheet :—

Archibald Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

As Bob has already told you, we received your letter just at breakfast-time. I was of course very much gratified by the

manner in which you obtained it for me, and at the same time very much grieved at the idea of leaving you all so soon; but what pained me most of all was the idea that I had by my thoughtlessness and want of application inflicted so much pain on our dear mother. I can only get Ballantine four times a-week, but I hope by my application during that time to make up for the loss of the other two hours. Of course I do not mean that I am not to study except with him. It is most gratifying to us all to think in what high respect and esteem the memory of our father is held among people of the highest rank, and the feeling that I have attained this appointment by my father's virtues will, I can assure you, correct my own faults.

In the meantime William in India proceeded quietly but successfully on his career, anxious to lend his assistance in respect to his young brother, and full of interest in everything that went on at home. His pleasure in the books which he received from time to time was great. "You say I never mention whether the books you send are to my liking," he says. "I am sure at any rate they have been a source of great pleasure to me, and have generally been just such as I would wish to have."

W. Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

MORADABAD, 12*th April* 1837.

If I have not named books in particular for you to send me, it is because I have never had any reason to complain of those I have got, and because I know that you, though you are booksellers, have to pay nearly as much as other people for those you don't publish, and have wished to have you to send those you might have. New books we get in our club generally, at least all novels. Any of the new cheap editions of standard works I like, and of these you have sent me a good number. Bulwer I really do not like, except 'Pelham.' His conceit and the demand which he seems to be always making on one's

applause, rendering it impossible ever to forget the author in his book, quite disgust me. I think Marryat incomparably the best novelist at present, but his two last have been but poor stuff. There are two or three books which I must ask you to let me have, however. Crabbe's works—I have an odd volume or two of his, and I am not sure but I like his poetry better than any other—Boswell's 'Johnson,' and Byron. Of these I think there have been small editions published lately. Now this, you will say, is a modest request! but you have so often mentioned the subject to me that you might think me indifferent about books, and regardless of your kind presents of them, if I did not specify a little.

I may add this modest soldier's private opinions about some of the little wars which were continually going on in India, and which, though the circumstances under which he wrote are much changed, are still of interest, since amid all revolutions the East never changes, and the same dangers, the same intrigues, and the same "soft hearts," continually remain:—

15*th October* 1838.

As to the war, I believe we know nothing more about it than when I last wrote except the formal declaration by the Governor-General, which will, no doubt, excite considerable attention at home. It only arrived here this morning, and I have only had a glance at it. The Russians, I think, are hinted at, but not mentioned. There appears to me, however, to be but little doubt that Government must have had notice of this intriguing with the chief of Cabul. The expenses of the expedition will be enormous, and it would never have been undertaken without good ground for apprehension. I am very anxious to see what is said on the subject at home. It is to be hoped we shall not have the old cry of the ambitious views of the Government in this country revived. It is all very easy to say limit your empire; but the thing is impossible, as an Asiatic prince or noble has no idea of not seizing a country if he has the power,

so they attribute little better motives to our Government for its moderation; and such is their folly that they have yet little idea of our strength. Look, for instance, at the present state of the Nepaulese, a state which cannot bring above 15,000 men into the field even in their own territory. Yet this petty state, though entirely secluded from every other by the Himalayas on one side and our frontier on the other, is, according to report, ready to make an attack on us the moment the Army for Candahar gets some distance off. Government has issued orders for strengthening the force on the frontier very considerably though, which shows the reports are not without foundation. Our men are all returning from furlough at present, and say all the country-people are in a great fright, and think our empire is coming to an end. "They are such fools," said Subadar to me the other day, "have such soft hearts (*kucher did*); they are in a greater fright now than when *I* was in Lord Lake's army, and all India nearly was against us." Nevertheless [adds the writer], I have enlisted 200 as fine men as I could wish to get, within the last few months, and there is no fear but we could get as many more.

William was not aware at this time that a third brother was so soon to be added to the portion of the family in India; but no doubt his own worthy career gave the elder brothers confidence in sending another youth to that great and distant world. We will now leave, however, the busy family arrangements, and return to the history of the Magazine and the new contributors who began with many varieties of mood and opinions to fill up the places of the old.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE LIGHTS OF 'MAGA.'

THE PROFESSOR'S RESPONSE — ANONYMITY IN LITERATURE — BRANWELL BRONTË DESIRES ADMITTANCE TO 'MAGA': HIS LETTERS AND POEMS— JOHN STERLING — WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR — REV. JAMES WHITE— THACKERAY INTRODUCED TO THE BLACKWOODS—THE POLITICAL ARTICLE — LORD NEAVES — THE INCOMPARABLE CHRISTOPHER — ALISON'S REMARKABLE INDUSTRY AND RANGE OF SUBJECT — THE YOUNG EDITOR'S CONTROL — 'TEN THOUSAND A-YEAR' — LETTER FROM THACKERAY— DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE references in these letters to the Magazine and its existing contributors show many new names filling up the old places. The first, the most active, and unfailing of all the supporters of the Magazine, Wilson, had responded nobly to the appeal made both in words and by the silent but even more effectual argument of an evident emergency, and had worked for the Magazine at that moment of transition, while still the young men were unfamiliar and timid in their father's seat, with the energy and industry of early days. And the affectionate and almost filial reverence with which they regarded him could not be better expressed than by Alexander's letter written from London, whither he had gone—not only to transact the usual publisher's business, but specially to set forth in the world his brother

Tom, as has been already mentioned. It was the first time the young man had gone on his own charges, so to speak, and the circumstances no doubt added to the feeling with which he turned to his father's faithful friend :—

Alexander Blackwood to Professor Wilson.

[Without date], *Spring* '35.

I have been so very busy the whole time I have been here that I have not had time to write to you sooner; but you will have heard from my brother that, so far as the matters that brought me to London at this particular time are concerned, I have been very fortunate. We have got, I think, Mr Murray's agency put upon a fair footing, and I think we have got a situation for my brother Tom which will give him a fair prospect of making his way in the world. I have myself met with every attention and kindness from the different people I have been among.

I am happy to tell you that the Magzine never in my experience was so much talked about, everybody praising it; and what is fully more to the purpose, Mr Cadell has sold a much greater number than usual of the last four numbers. All this is most gratifying, and adds to the feelings of regard and gratitude which we must ever entertain towards you, who have been our mainstay and support.

Wilson's work, however, slackened when the emergency was thus tided over, and the brothers had settled steadily to their work, gathering experience every day. They were, as their father had been, incessantly fretted, kept in anxiety and suspense, and disappointed by him in later years, but never lose their "feelings of regard and gratitude." And the world as well as the Blackwoods was always eager to recognise the charm of Christopher; and whatever we may think now, when time has a little dulled his

colour and changed manners taken away much of that charm, it is certain that in his generation there was no writer more certain to please or whose reputation was more firmly established.

As for the other members of the earlier group, the name of Lockhart, except in the constant and cordial intercourse which was maintained with him privately to the end of his life, and in which he always showed much affection and an interest almost fatherly in the young men, seldom appeared in the Magazine. His own big 'Quarterly,' not always easy to manage, and many cares and troubles, occupied and distracted him. He was always desirous of doing something, but rarely or never, I think, after this period succeeded in doing so. Maginn had dropped away—not altogether, for we still hear of him at intervals for many years after; but every kind of trust in or respect for him was long gone. Such an old and steady henchman as Croly worked on, a constant prop and support, his sober flow of production always to be trusted to. The gentle Delta was still at hand, ready to lend the aid of his judgment and advice, ever kind and helpful. His sole effort in fiction, 'Mansie Wauch,' a story in the style of Galt, had been eminently successful, but his mild fount of song began to exhaust itself in the changed age, not so tolerant of poetry as it had been a dozen years before. It is somewhat humiliating to a writer to find out how completely those who have delighted one generation die out of memory of the next, and how, above all, the contributors to periodical literature who have proved able to carry the public with them on a strong current of power and success for many years,

should remain, even to their successors, veiled figures moving in a mist, giving up their identity to that of the organ to which they were content to sacrifice their share of contemporary fame. This is not the case nowadays, when every neophyte loves to emblazon his own name and claim his individual share of reputation even in the severe title-page of 'Maga.' But it was so in the first half of the century, when the steady and strongly marching regiment gave all their force to their standard, with a loyalty unbroken.

Here is one piece of troublesome business, however, which one of these veiled figures, then very active indeed, and not inclined to put up with any neglect or insult, threw upon the young men's hands. 'Fraser,' I have already said, in the hands of Maginn, had been as far framed on the model of 'Maga' in her least reasonable days as circumstances would permit:—

Alaric A. Watts to Robert Blackwood.

Ln., *5th Oct.* 1835.

In the number of 'Fraser's Magazine' for June last there is an attack upon me by Maginn which for venomous falsehood and malignity has seldom been equalled. The singular audacity with which real names are paraded in that attack might delude strangers into the belief that there is some one of the many assertions contained in it that are really founded on fact. You will not fail to observe that a most impertinent and insulting allusion is there made to my acquaintanceship with your late worthy father, to the vileness of which I am sure you will not hesitate to bear your testimony.

I have a pile of letters from Mr Blackwood which sufficiently attest his sense of the zeal with which, so far as my humble means extended, I endeavoured to promote the success of his Magazine, and that I was actuated by no mercenary motive in so doing you must be well aware, and equally so of the terms of courtesy and friendship in which I stood with your father.

I ask, therefore, that you will read the paragraph of which I complain, and say if during a period [of] more than fifteen years that we were acquainted he had, so far as you are aware, any reason to complain of my conduct, or if he ever employed me in any menial capacity.

You may form some notion of the position in which Mr Fraser and his gang stand at this moment when I inform you that there is not a single living British artist who will not make his appearance at the Court of King's Bench when the trial comes on for the purpose of giving the lie to these statements respecting [me ?], and there is scarcely a literary person alluded to in that blackguard lampoon who has not already volunteered his testimony. I have now fifty letters before me on the subject, and all of one tenor.

An attempt has been made to deter me from going on with the proceeding by assuring me that Fraser will be unable to meet the consequences of a verdict against him; but however this may be, I shall do my best to put these ruffians down. There will certainly be some expense in the affair, for I purpose calling no fewer than 100 witnesses, if the judge will let me, to disprove every syllable they have stated. I shall print the trial separately, with the text of letters I have received from all quarters, and such an exposure of the practices of the *mock*-Blackwood as will leave them but little ground for triumph. As your father's name has been thus impudently introduced, I am anxious to receive a few lines from [you] calculated to remove the impression which the statement referring to him is calculated to create.

There is no trace, however, of this tremendous trial, which ended, I imagine, like so many other threats of the kind, in nothing.

We may add here before going further, as it is mentioned in Alexander's letter to Wilson, the arrangement to which he referred, made with Mr Murray. It testifies to the kind desire of that potentate to draw closer, with the young men in their anxious beginning, those ties which were so often

made and broken with their father, with mutual offence of the moment, which did not, however, do more than interrupt the natural sympathy and union of two men so similarly placed, both a little hot-headed, but without malice.

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

I spent a very pleasant evening at Mr Murray's yesterday evening, quite *en famille.* Strange to say, we were in the drawing-room by ½-past 8, and he showed me all his original Byron MSS. and prints, &c. Mrs Murray was most agreeable. As I was going away Murray told me that as he knew my time was a good deal occupied, to write him a note the day before I intend calling upon him, and he will be glad to have some conversation with me. "In the meantime," he said, "put this in your pocket." The following is a copy of the memorandum:—

"Books consigned by Mr Murray to Messrs Blackwood for sale will be charged at sale price, from which a commission of 10 p. ct. will be allowed on the amount sold. Messrs B. to settle for all sales half-yearly on the 1st Jany. and 1st July in each year by their promissory note (payable in London) at 4 mos. from the time of settlement. The above terms admit of some exceptions, when books sent to Messrs Blackwood may not be Mr Murray's own property. Such books will be specified, and will be sent on the terms stated on the invoices. Messrs Blackwood to advertise the books in the Scottish papers to the best of their judgment and discretion, except in cases where instructions may be sent to the contrary."

The credit is rather short, but this we cannot help, and I will write him to-morrow to say that I will call upon him on Monday. We may therefore consider the matter almost closed. If anything occurs to you that I should speak to Murray about independently of what was formerly talked about, let me know. But I think there is nothing.

The list of the new captains and chiefs of the Magazine includes none so remarkable as the names above mentioned. Before entering upon the new contributors, however, we may glance aside for a

moment at an unfortunate, already too sharply indicated in literature, who was never, I think, a contributor, though this was no fault of his, since he did all that was in his power by frequent missives and impassioned appeals to become so. His poems, alas! were neither printed nor returned. I find them pathetically imploring a hearing, folded up in the old covers, *post paid*, and costing—it is difficult to make out how much: 2s. 2d., 1s. 11d.—more than poor Branwell Brontë could afford to pay. I hope they were at least read, and that he was informed of their rejection; but even this is not sure. This poor fellow has had hard measure in the world: he has been made the foil of his brilliant sisters; his sins and miseries have been held up to the admiration of all men, exaggerated instead of veiled over as Charity would have suggested. I would rather, I think, have been accused of bad manners and unrefined language to the end of time than have laid these to the account of a brother; therefore I confess to an indignant desire to find something in Branwell Brontë and his verses of a redeeming character. There is, I think, a certain amount of vigour in them and skill in managing the metre which Scott so often made heroic; but the whimsical yet tragical letters which accompanied them must, I fear, have appeared ridiculous to our clear-headed publishers. The first I find is as follows. It begins in large letters, "Sir, Read what I write":—

Branwell Brontë to the Editor of 'Blackwood's Magazine.'

And would to Heaven you would believe in me, for then you would attend to and act upon it!

I have addressed you twice before, and now I do it again.

But it is not from affected hypocrisy that I begin my letter with the name of James Hogg; for the writings of that man in your numbers, his speeches in your 'Noctes,' when I was a child, laid a hold on my mind which succeeding years have consecrated into a most sacred feeling. I cannot express, though you can understand, the heavenliness of associations connected with such articles as Professor Wilson's, read and re-read while a little child, with all their poetry of language and divine flights into that visionary region of imagination which one very young would believe reality, and which one entering into manhood would look back upon as a glorious dream. I speak so, sir, because as a child 'Blackwood' formed my chief delight, and I feel certain that no child before enjoyed reading as I did, because none ever had such works as "The Noctes," "Christmas Dreams," "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket," to read. And even now, "Millions o' reasonable creatures at this hour—na', no at this hour," &c. "Long, long ago seems the time when we danced hand in hand with our golden-haired sister, whom all who looked on loved. Long, long ago the day on which she died. That hour so far more dreadful than any hour that can darken us on earth, when she, her coffin and that velvet pall descended, and descended slowly, slowly into the horrid clay, and we were borne deathlike and wishing to die out of the churchyard that from that moment we thought we could never enter more" —passages like these, sir (and when that last was written my sister died)—passages like these, read then and remembered now, afford feelings which I repeat I cannot describe. But one of those who roused these feelings is dead, and neither from himself or yourself shall I hear him speak again. I quiver for his death, because to me he was a portion of feelings which I suppose nothing can rouse hereafter: because to you he was a contributor of sterling originality, and in the "Noctes" a subject for your unequalled writing. He and others like him gave your Magazine the peculiar character which made it famous: as these men die it will decay unless their places are supplied by others like them. Now, sir, to you I appear writing with conceited assurance: but *I am not;* for I know myself so far as to believe in my own originality, and on that ground to desire admittance into your ranks. And do not

wonder that I demand so determinedly: for the remembrances I spoke of have fixed you and your Magazine in such a manner upon my mind that the idea of striving to aid another periodical is *horribly repulsive.* My resolution is to devote my ability to you, and for God's sake, till you see whether or not I can serve you, do not coldly refuse my aid. All, sir, that I desire of you is: *that in answer to this letter you would request a Specimen or specimens of my writing, and I even wish that you would name the subject on which you would wish me to write.* In letters previous to this I have perhaps spoken too openly in respect to the extent of my powers. But I did so because I determined to say what I believed. I *know* that I am not one of the wretched writers of the day. I know that I possess strength to assist you beyond some of your own contributors; but I wish to make you the judge in this case and give you the benefit of its decision.

Now, sir, do not act like a commonplace person, but like a man willing to examine for himself. Do not turn from the native truth of my letters but *prove me;* and if I do not stand the proof I will not further press myself on you. If I do stand it—why—— You have lost an able writer in James Hogg, and God grant you may get one in

PATRICK BRANWELL BRONTË.

HAWORTH, *near Bradford,* YORKS,
December 1835.

This wonderful epistle seems to have received no answer. If I may hint a fault, this was one of the particulars in which the house of Blackwood was not perfect; but I am surprised that their ever lively sense of humour did not make the brothers desire to hear more. In four months there came another letter, inscribed in very large printed characters, "SIR, READ NOW AT LEAST," and dated from Haworth, April 8, 1836.[1] Robert Blackwood was at that time

[1] I understand from an expert in the Brontë literature, Mr Clement Shorter, that the unfortunate boy was but sixteen at the date of the first letter.

alone in Edinburgh to answer all appeals, and probably thought the writer crazy. And this time the Specimen for which poor Brontë had begged the editor to send was enclosed, a long closely written poem, with the unpromising title of "Misery, Scene 1st":—

The affair which accompanies my letter [he says] is certainly sent for insertion in 'Blackwood' as a Specimen which, whether bad or good, I earnestly desire you to look over: it may be disagreeable, but you will thus KNOW whether, in putting it into the fire, you would gain or lose. It would now be impudent in me to speak of my powers, since in five minutes you can tell whether or not they are fudge and nonsense. But this I know, that if they are such I have no intention of stooping under them. New powers I will get if I can, and provided I keep them, you, sir, shall see them.

But don't think, sir [the poor fellow adds], that I write nothing but Miseries. My day is far too much in the morning for such continual shadow. Nor think either (and this I entreat) that I wish to deluge you with poetry. I send it because it is soon read and comes from the heart. If it goes to yours, print it, and write to me on the subject of contribution. Then I will send prose. But if what I now send is worthless, what I have said has only been conceit and folly, yet CONDEMN NOT UNHEARD.

About a year later, on the 9th January 1837, the youth wrote again, imploring and demanding a personal interview:—

In a former letter I hinted that I was in possession of something, the design of which, whatever might be its execution, would be superior to that of any series of articles which has yet appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine.' But being prose, of course, and of great length as well as peculiar in character, a description of it by letter would be quite impossible. So surely a journey of three hundred miles shall not deter me

from a knowledge of myself and a hope of utterance into the open world.

Now, sir, all I ask of you is to permit this interview, and in answer to this letter to say that you will *see* me, were it only for one half-hour. The fault be mine if you have reason to repent your permission.

Now, is the trouble of writing a single line to outweigh the certainty of doing good to a fellow-creature and the possibility of doing good to yourself? Will you still so wearisomely refuse me a word when you can neither know what you refuse nor whom you are refusing? Do you think your Magazine so perfect that no addition to its power would be either possible or desirable? Is it pride which actuates you—or custom—or prejudice? Be a Man, sir! and think no more of these things. *Write* to me: tell me that you will receive a visit; and rejoicingly will I take upon myself the labour, which if it succeed will be an advantage both to you and me, and if it fail will still be an advantage, because I shall then be assured of the impossibility of succeeding.

Poor Branwell! This tragic yet indignant appeal got no answer, we fear, any more than his previous epistles. His verses, so long, so carefully copied in clear and legible print letters to be easily read, have lain there for precisely sixty years, perhaps not unread. I hope that Robert, who was, however, not poetical, at least glanced at them. There is a certain vigour of description in the first and the last verses. I will not try the reader's patience with the dreary waste between.

How fast that courser fleeted by
With arched neck backward tossed on high,
And snorting nostrils opened wide,
And foam-flecked chest and gory side.
I saw his rider's darkened form,
As on they hurried through the storm:
Forward he pressed, his plume behind
Flew whistling in the wintry wind;

But his clenched teeth and angry eye
Seemed wind and tempest to defy,
And eagerly he bent his sight
To pierce the darkness of the night.
And oft he gazed and gazed again
Through the rough blast and driving rain.
  Look up and view the midnight heaven,
When mass on mass continual driven,
The wild black storm-clouds sweep and change
Like formless phantoms vast and strange,
That bend their gloomy brows from high,
And pass in midnight darkness by:
And still they pass and still they come
Without a flash to break the gloom.
I cannot see the foam and spray
Which mark that raging torrent's sway;
But I can hear the ceaseless roar,
Where swollen and chafed its waters pour.
There where yon black'ned oaks on high
Blend wildly with the midnight sky,
Tossing their bare and groaning boughs
Like some dread fight of giant foes,—
There where that glimpse of moonlight shines
  From the wild waste of heaven sent down,
And spreads its silver trembling lines
  Amid the darkness, then is gone.
There stays the horseman: wide before
Deep and dark the waters roar,
But down the lone vale far away
Glances one solitary ray.
The sound of winds and waters rise,
And sweeps the sleet-shower o'er the skies,
While dreariest darkness all around
Makes still more drear each sight and sound.
But heeds not such that cavalier:
Reining his trembling charger there,
He halts upon the river's brink,
Where all its wild waves surge and sink,
Shades with his hand his anxious eye,
And through the night looks eagerly.
Why smiled he when that far-off light
Again broke twinkling on his sight?
Why frowned he when it sunk again
Amid the darksome veil of rain?
Till brightly flashing forth once more
It streams and twinkles far before!

Lord Albert is the name of the cavalier. He is of the race of the Laras and Corsairs. He has come from a lost battle, where all his followers have been dispersed and slain; but the light he sees is the light of his home, where his lady awaits him. When he reaches that home, however, it is but to find the lady dying, and amid many dreadful reflections and memories despair seizes him at the sight. The conclusion is as follows:—

> See, through the shadows of the night
> Burst hotly, hasting onward there,
> A wounded charger vast and white,
> All wildly mad with pain and fear.
> With hoofs of thunder on he flies,
> Shaking his white mane to the skies,
> Till on his huge knees tumbling down,
> Across the fallen chieftain thrown,
> With a single plunge of dying force
> His vast limbs hide Lord Albert's corse.

These are specimens of the Specimen which poor Branwell sent to Blackwood. At last we are able to obey his passionate entreaty not to condemn him unheard. Notwithstanding the chilling effect of the silence with which alone his petition was received, he had the courage to write again years after, in September 1842, in a much more subdued tone, begging "most respectfully to offer the accompanying lines for insertion in 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.'" It is again a long poem, treating the not uncommon theme of a long absent son's return in a somewhat novel way,—for the poet's aim is to show the great difference between the eagerness of the expectant family and the disappointment and disenchantment of the experienced man who had left his home as a boy. There is a good deal of

truth and some felicity in the description of the waiting household:—

'Tis only afternoon, but midnight's gloom
Could scarce seem stiller in the darkest room
Than does this ancient mansion's strange repose
So long ere common light of daylight close.
I hear the clock slow ticking in the hall,
And far away the woodland waterfall
Stands lost, like stars from out the noonday skies,
And seldom noticed till those stars arise.
The parlour group are seated all together,
With long looks turned towards the threatening weather,
Whose gay clouds gathering o'er the moveless trees,
Nor break nor brighten in the passing breeze.
Why seems that group attired with such a care,
And who's the visitor they watch for there?
The aged father on his customed seat
With cushioned stool to prop his crippled feet,
Averting from the rest his forehead high
To hide the drop that quivers in his eye;
And strange the pang which bids that drop to start,
For hope and sadness mingle in his heart—
A trembling hope for what may come to-day,
A sadness sent from what has passed away.
Fast by the window sits his daughter fair,
Who, gazing steadfast on the clouded air,
Clasps close her mother's hand, and paler grows
With every leaf that falls or breeze that blows.
Even these young children o'er the table bent,
And on that map with childish gaze intent,
Are guiding fancied ships o'er ocean's foam,
And wondering "what he's like," and "when he'll come."
Ah! many an hour has seen yon circle pore
O'er that great map of India's far-off shore,
And sigh at every name the paper gave
Lest it might mark their well-loved warrior's grave.
Oft have their eyes a burning tear let fall
O'er Ganges' mimic tide or Delhi's wall;
Oft have their hearts left England far away
To wander o'er the wastes of red Assaye!

We will not attempt to follow the sensations of Sir Henry Tunstall, who—having been only sixteen years

in India, yet has the good fortune to return "a victor general," "with a ribbon at his breast and a Sir to his name," like Sir Ronald in the ballad—finds it so difficult to respond with proper warmth to the enthusiasm of his family. But I think that in earlier days, when the Magazine contained a great deal of poetry, this one of poor Branwell's specimens would not perhaps have been rejected—certainly not after that last allusion to India and the family poring over the map, which would have appealed so strongly to the good father's heart away with his Willie. Poor Branwell Brontë! it is evident that he found no favour with 'Maga'; and we may allow that it was indeed something of a hard fate for the rejected aspirant, who had not even the honour of a refusal, to be placed by nature with his halting verse in the midst of three clever sisters whose verses did not halt, and whose fire of genius was too much, not too little—though it is they, and not he, with whom the world has sympathised most.

This unsuccessful suitor has no place but a fantastic one in this record, from the associations which now encircle his tragic shadow. Another, more important and less unfortunate, who bore for some time in the pages of 'Maga' the title of "Our New Contributor," appears suddenly in the spring of 1837, apparently without introduction or credentials except the poems which accompanied his first letter. Posterity has not preserved the name of John Sterling as his contemporaries must have believed it was worthy to be preserved. What we know of him now is not by his own writings, but by the curious fact that two biographies of a man who did nothing in his short life of import-

ance, and left nothing behind him to justify such a double record, were given to the world shortly after his death, one of which at least has a high place in permanent literature, — the extraordinary elegy, apology, eulogium of Thomas Carlyle. That there were reasons besides the merits of their subject for the two books—that of Archdeacon Hare on the side of his own benign and moderate churchmanship, and Carlyle's on that of a wilder freedom and negation—no one would deny. I have always felt, notwithstanding a great affection and admiration for Carlyle, that his Life of Sterling has in it a breath of Mephistopheles, something of the mocking scornful spirit, satirically superior to all a young man's hereditary beliefs, and with a careless pleasure in pursuing and stripping him of these but weakly founded non-individual religious views which had built up the outer fabric of his life, such as hurts the moral sense, wonderful as is the almost lyrical strain of its lament and praise. To be instrumental in any way in persuading a spirit whose days on earth are numbered, out of all confidence in a life to come, which yet might give fulfilment to his hopes, seems to me the saddest and most dreadful work in which a great intellect can engage. This, however, is altogether apart from the personality of Sterling himself, which was that of most of the subjects of such strife, attractive, poetical, thin, and so subdued and weakened by ill health as to add tenfold to the dangers of a nature easily dominated by the thought of others greater than himself. It is not in this aspect that he presents himself before us, however, in the little bundle of correspondence, which gives a brief history, by indications, of his passage across

the horizon of 'Maga'—a period apparently of satisfaction in his career, though it came late in his short life, when already migrations from England to Madeira and other places, where health is sought so often in vain, were the habit and condition of his existence. His first letter is from Bordeaux, near which he was living, enclosing poems—a kind of literary ware which was assuredly of more importance in those days than now, when it is difficult to imagine a literary connection of this kind being founded upon a few pieces of occasional verse:—

John Sterling to the Editor of 'Blackwood's Magazine.'

March 27, 1837.

I beg to offer the enclosed poems for insertion in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' if you should consider them suitable for that purpose. My life has been chiefly a literary one, and I find that a mass of short manuscripts in prose and verse have accumulated on my hands, for which I could find no use so agreeable to myself as that of publishing them from time to time in your Magazine. There is often, however, I believe, a difference of inclination between editors and writers as to these matters, and I am indeed in much doubt whether anything I could write would answer your purpose or would deserve to appear in company with the compositions which the world attributes to Professor Wilson. I should therefore be much obliged to you if you could favour me with a few words saying whether I need take the trouble of forwarding to you any other of my productions. In case you should see fit to print my verses, I beg it may be with the signature S. S. S. and not under my name.

It would appear that some at least of the manuscripts sent were approved, for a few months after Sterling writes again, enclosing "a second series of 'Crystals from a Cavern,'"—philosophical aphorisms something after the manner of his friend Archdeacon

Hare's well-known 'Guesses at Truth.' The correspondence, however, for some time after this becomes checkered by disappointment and complaint as to manuscripts engulfed without being either used or rejected, and entreaties half-indignant that they might be at least returned to him:—

I take this opportunity of begging that as (by no means to my surprise) the greater part of the papers I have sent you do not appear to be suitable for your purposes, you would do me the favour of letting me have any of them as to which you may finally have come to this decision. I take the liberty of asking this because in copying them for you I made alterations which I do not wish to lose the benefit of. If you desire it, I shall be happy to send you a continuation of "Crystals from a Cavern." But I trust you will be candid enough to inform me without hesitation if you have no such wish.

On another occasion he is vexed to find No. 3 of a series of sketches printed as No. 2, the real No. 2 neither being used nor returned to him:—

I have no pretensions to interfere in the conduct of your work, but so far as the matters extend which immediately concern myself I should wish to be informed at your convenience of any decisions you may come to as to my writings. Had I been aware that you did not deign to publish "Land and Sea" [the omitted No. 2] I should have begged you to return it to me, and should probably long since have found a different channel through which to bring it before the public, reserving for my own consideration the question of going on with the series in your Magazine or of abandoning it. I beg you to believe that I send you nothing on which I have not employed much conscientious labour, with a view to give it permanent value much more than to immediate popularity.

Alas for the poor authors whose conscientious labour tells for so little sixty years after! How few of

those able writers who put forth all their strength with such strenuous hope of permanence are ever thought of now! These discontents culminate in a very severe letter on the same subject a few months after, when again a later number of a series had been preferred to an earlier one :—

August 1, 1838.

I have before been compelled to remonstrate for the seeming loss of a MS. of mine containing a tale called "Land and Sea," and I begged some time ago for a distinct statement whether it could or could not be recovered. To this letter I have received no answer, and I am now altogether uncertain whether either of two papers of mine is in existence. I am sorry to be obliged to repeat that the publication of anything I write or the remuneration for it is a matter of indifference to me compared with the safe preservation of the papers themselves, which are the results of an amount of Thought and Labour such as I am by no means willing ultimately to throw away. It is very possible that the continuance of my connection with your Magazine may be of no moment to you, and I only beg that there may be a distinct understanding on the subject, and especially as to the points of the safety of the papers sent to you, and of an answer to any inquiries which I may find it necessary to address to you. I am also particularly desirous that you would be kind enough as soon as convenient to inform me of your determination not to publish anything of mine that may happen not to be suitable to your pages, and to return the manuscript to me. I sent to you a number of small poems called "Thoughts in Rhyme," which you must have had in your hands at least a twelvemonth, some of which were published, and others, of which I have no copies, I can obtain no account of. The story of the "Onyx Ring," if you do not intend to make use of it, I should be glad to receive as early as may happen to suit you. I will only add that I earnestly hope that the want of accuracy in business, which I am thus compelled to mention, may not have arisen from ill-health or any other misfortune.

The charitable supposition with which this severe epistle ends was not without foundation, for all these tribulations occurred when Robert Blackwood was left alone to transact all the business of the Magazine, with that erratic adviser behind him to whom most persons looked as the very heart of the machine, the most irregular of men, Wilson, in whose hands manuscripts were very apt to get lost or mislaid. I am obliged to add that an instalment of the "Crystals," which evidently has never seen the printer, lies snugly embedded in this parcel of letters, which, perhaps, for anything I can tell—for it has no heading nor indication of the author's intentions—may be the missing No. 2. But all things come more or less right in the end, and the "Onyx Ring" was published in the place of honour, as has been already noted in the family letters. Finally, it would seem that all were recovered except certain "Thoughts in Rhyme," seventy distichs. "The loss of them is a very serious annoyance to me," says Sterling, "but I fear Professor Wilson is not a professor of punctuality." There were many pleasures too, as well as vexations, in the correspondence. Professor Wilson (was it in remorse of heart for the lost MS.?) wrote a very flattering notice of the New Contributor in one of his articles, which touched Sterling's heart, and brought from him this expression of his own modest confidence in his powers:—

May I beg you to offer my compliments to Professor Wilson, and to say that I feel very sincerely grateful to him for his kindly feeling, and for the frankness and eloquence with which he has expressed it? I am far from pretending that I think my writings worthless, knowing in my own mind the earnestness of my views and the pains which the attainment and utterance of them have cost me; but I should also have been

far from attributing to them the degree of value set upon them by a man so distinguished and himself so worthy of applause.

There was a smaller grievance about the signature by which these works were distinguished.

You will observe that I have signed all the poems with the word *Archæus*, which I shall be obliged to you to print as it stands. You cannot go on designating me as a New Contributor. I wish my verses to have some distinctive mark, and I prefer one of my own selection. Had you employed from the first the initials I used (S. S. S.) there would now be no difficulty."

At the end of his connection with the Magazine, Sterling undertook a translation of Goethe, in which, beginning with

the part of the autobiography which terminates with the appearance of Götz and Werter, I propose to insert accounts, with specimens, of all his most important works. The series would thus, I think, become one of real and lasting value: and as I am fond of the subject, and have studied his novels and poems with some diligence, I should hope to give on the whole a more complete image of the man and the writer than we have yet seen in England. My views [Sterling adds] are in many most material respects very different from those of my friend Thomas Carlyle, who I think mixes a good deal too much of his own potent brandy with Goethe's pure wine. Goethe will run [he adds], if I have health and you patience, to 30 or 40 numbers.

Which indeed was a statement to give any editor pause. It sounds a little curious nowadays to note one of the difficulties which occurred to him in this great piece of work.

CLIFTON, *Nov.* 6, 1839.

I have one remark to make on the MS. now sent, to which I beg your special attention. It is a long sort of paraphrase

of a part in the narrative of the Book of Genesis which may perhaps give offence, though not in my judgment reasonably. It begins at page 54. I wish you would read it and judge for yourselves, and if you would like to leave it out be good enough to omit as far as page 92, and insert the following sentence within brackets: ["Goethe here inserts a long paraphrase of the patriarchal history, containing both striking reflections and beautiful pictures of human life, but on the whole, perhaps, not compensating English readers for the space which it would occupy. We shall therefore omit the passage.—TR."] Be good enough also to attend to another point. I have inserted a few words in a note at the foot of page 127, which are these: "It is odd to be obliged to remind any reader of the Bible that the Sabbath is not Sunday, but Saturday." If this will shock your Presbyterian country, pray strike your pen through it.

Why should it shock a Presbyterian country to hear that the Sabbath was Saturday? This amazing specimen of the mutual ignorance which was once so common between the two countries was, we fear, very characteristic of the clergyman John Sterling was—a clergyman, at the same time, as little as his orders permitted. Was it supposed, we wonder, that a Presbyterian country did not know so simple a fact as this, and was more ignorant than the "any reader of the Bible" apologised to in the previous sentence? But there is nothing in life so bewildering as the mistakes and ignorance of the learned and wise.

We are tempted to note here, before proceeding to the more familiar and natural type of the Contributor, a curious inroad made some years later into the pages of the Magazine by Walter Savage Landor, who has left the deposit of a blazing letter among all the quiet productions of the correspon-

dence, which it is wonderful he did not set on fire. The "Imaginary Conversation between Southey and Porson" called forth some expression of applause from the publisher, which the hot-headed poet construed into a promise to receive whatever he chose to send—a promise never safe to be taken for granted with that independent-minded house. Upon this arose a hot answer and calm reply, which would seem to have ended the connection. But here is one short document that remains, equally illustrative of the noisy inconsequence of the writer, and of the droll and incongruous hero-worship of the Scottish printing-office :—

Walter Savage Landor to Messrs Blackwood.

You have given an excellent reason for refusing to insert my criticism on Bulwer's writings. I myself have the weakness to prefer truth to consistency.

Pray do me the favour to inform your compositor that if ever again he has the impudence and audacity to alter a letter or a point of my writings he shall see no more of them! In the first page he has put the name of Wilson after those of Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante. Now, I never have spoken otherwise of Wilson than as a man of varied and great genius; but if I mentioned him with Dante and Shakespeare, I not only should compare dissimilars, but bring his just claims into question. I believe he himself would be the very first to blame my imprudence.

The compositor would probably not be much affected by Landor's threat. Probably he believed that the sinner was the master and not the man. The absurdity of the offence and the oblique threatenings of the offended are both almost too grotesque for serious history.

The other names which appear, if not as absolutely new contributors, yet as assuming greater importance during the reign of the brothers, bulked more largely in the forces of 'Maga' than they did in the literary annals of their time. They belong to that second rank of writers, so closely serried and so strong, who back up the leaders with, I can scarcely say silent force, since utterance is their vocation—but with an anonymous and so far disinterested support that their best blows are often attributed to the captains and champions in front of them, and their individuality scarcely comes at all to the knowledge of the world. One of the most active and energetic of these was the Rev. James White, a man widely known and warmly appreciated in literary circles and in a very wide and genial circle of friends, but little known outside these expansive boundaries, notwithstanding the extreme width of his range in literature, which extended from the lively experiences of 'Sir Frizzle Pumpkin' and 'Nights at Mess' to a work on the 'Eighteen Christian Centuries.' He too began his connection with 'Maga' as an unknown correspondent, a curate in an obscure country parish altogether outside the region of the first Blackwood band, so largely recruited from Edinburgh and Dublin, though with occasional interposition of less distinct figures from the Metropolis. Mr White, however, was a congenial spirit, a Scotsman by birth, and of easier and more sympathetic comprehension than the graver English contributors who had as yet appeared in the Magazine. After a number of years in country curacies, from one of which came 'Sir Frizzle Pumpkin,' a visitor scarcely to be expected from such a

locality, he finally settled in the Isle of Wight, where his wife was possessed of some property; and from that place there arose a stream of contributions on all subjects—often poetical, sometimes political—reviews, essays, tales, and poems, so that for a time the genial writer felt himself guilty and a defaulter when he had not something to send for every number. This close communication produced an equally close intercourse and correspondence, never, I think, intermitted until the family of James White came to a conclusion. In the days when still all were young and full of the enjoyment of life, the friendship was very warm and cordial, Mr White's house at Bonchurch being a delightful refuge, full of wholesome gaiety and ease, after the crowds of London, which the Brothers Blackwood did not love any more than does their nephew, William, the present head. They found there the household warmth and mirth to which they were accustomed, and a humour and quick perception of the droll and ridiculous which agreed with their own. The genial clergyman loved the young men fresh from the centre of literature, and full of the news and criticism in which every brother of the pen delights, unless when it is directed against himself; and the editors and publishers, besides their warm friendship, were possessed with that strong esteem for a steady, ready, sound, and trustworthy contributor, in almost all cases to be depended upon to say what was right, and in every case to say something, and support the standard through thick and thin. The correspondence between them was a little scrappy, as letters must be which are chiefly concerned with articles and subjects for articles — subjects in many cases quite

passed from memory. Mr White had been a soldier, he had been a clergyman, he was now a landed proprietor on not a very large scale, feuing his land in sites for villas along the lovely Undercliff, and making the best of his not very extensive property. It was one of the jokes against him that even when on a visit he was not happy without a spud in his hand when he went out walking.

At the beginning of the friendship he calls upon Robert, who at that moment was paying his usual yearly dues to business and the world in London, to come to the country for refreshment, "to such moderate bed and board as a cottage can furnish," in the following lyrical outburst:—

Rev. James White to Robert Blackwood.

BONCHURCH, *6th March* 1838.

There has been no frost here this winter. The thermometer has never been below 45 in the shade, and the fields are getting yellow with primroses. After this Arcadian picture behold a beautiful cow redolent of cream in the background of it. I think you will be tempted to the trip.

In the second letter he adds:—

By the by, there is a friend of mine that I promised to introduce to you. He is the cleverest of all the London writers, I think—his name is Thackeray; a gentleman, a Cambridge man. I told him he had better not waste his time with the inferior magazines when he writes the best things (he is the Yellow Plush of 'Fraser' and the Major Gahagan of the 'New Monthly'), but go at once to you. He is shy, I suppose, for he said he wished you would *invite* him to contribute. If you will let me know whether you wish to hear from him I will communicate your reply; or if you wish to see him, he lives No. 13 Great Coram Street, Russell Square. He is also literary reviewer in the 'Times.'

Thackeray must have been studying Russell Square in those days in contemplation of the household he was to establish there and the great Becky. I am sorry to say no bond between him and 'Maga' was woven, now or ever after. His first communication, as I have said, was from some unknown reason neglected, and he never sent another, although later a warm friendship arose between the great writer and John Blackwood, unaffected by the absence of any literary tie.

"I must confess," Mr White says on another occasion, "it is very distressing to see how admirably 'Maga' gets on whether her regular contributors are idle or not!" which is a whimsical distress that must have occurred to many of these persons—a significant comment on the axiom that nobody is indispensable. Now and then he gives forth a little criticism upon other writers. "This is an admirable number," he says. "'The Squabash' is something like the fall of a church on the top of a haggis. I cannot say I admire the 'Picture Gallery' very much. 'Ten Thousand a-Year' is a hit: though, between ourselves, it is not a favourite of mine. Warren was in the island for a week, and dined here one day. Oh Tittlebat! 'Himself the wondrous hero of his song.'" The tie between Mr White and his publishers grew closer when young John Blackwood was settled in London, as shall be hereafter recorded, and became "the Metropolitan Branch," or "the Branch" *tout court*, to the jocular clergyman. His letters are full of pressing invitations:—

Blackgang Chine is certainly well worth seeing after his [John's] description of it. Your brother Robert saw it with

prophetic eye when he described it as the smallest quantity of water trickling over a piece of stone 4 feet high. But we have some sights worth seeing: particularly about 5 o'clock a roast leg of mutton and a bottle of old Port. Many people prefer that to Blackgang Chine.

In addition to the "Hints to Authors" [a series of papers which he had written for the Magazine], you will give me credit for being the author of Hints to Publishers when I extract from your brother Alexander's letter the following highly eloquent passage: "If you will be kind enough to send your vols. of Alison to Messrs B., 22 Pall Mall, we shall have them properly bound for you along with the last volume, which ought to have been sent to you long ago."

These were the delightful terms upon which author and publishers (sometimes) were in those days. To bind the volumes previously bestowed is an extent of munificence rarely attained. The Blackwoods were true descendants of their admirable father, whose use it was, as has been seen, to send delightful presents of the last new Waverley (not, alas! a publication of his own) and other attractive books to his correspondents, a habit that would be most worthy of repetition; but there are, alas! no new Waverleys now.

"Why don't you stir up the Professor?" Mr White says on another occasion; "a paper of his would make us all young again. There's more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, if you could only find a bait to hook it with." His criticism a little later—partly of Wilson, partly of Landor—tinged with all the prepossessions of a contemporary, is curious:—

This is a paper [one of his own enclosed] which I have entirely rewritten, and, in fact, changed altogether. I sent it to you once before, and you had the good taste to return it. I

think you will like it now, for it strikes me to be the best I have managed for a long time.

The last number was admirable, and Wilson great, glorious, and free as ever. It is a noble criticism, and in my opinion perfectly just. But, gracious heaven, what a Savage attack on Wordsworth! The writing is clever, the eye darkened with too many illustrative similes, and I see no characteristic distinction between the language of Porson and Southey. I suppose old Wordsworth is thoroughly egotistical, but it seems too bad in the Professor to knock down the Dagon he himself has raised. For what Porson says of Southey[1] is applicable in a million times the degree to Wordsworth. He has made Wordsworth's name so high that it has kept the sunshine off his own. That is an illustrative simile too, so perhaps they can't be avoided in talking of poets.

When was there such a number before! What a miracle that little wretch De Quincey is!

It will be a new idea to most readers that Wilson's efforts had made Wordsworth's name so high that it had kept the sunshine from his own; but I can remember when it was still the fixed conviction of many that it was he specially who had "made the reputation" of the greater poet, with occasional lapses, it must be owned. It is curious to note how the personality of the Professor was woven, as it were, into the tissue of the Magazine. It is only a few pages back that Savage Landor denounced the printing-office for interpolating Christopher's name into the list of sovran poets.

Meanwhile many visits to Bonchurch took place, where the best of company was to be met, and occasional adventures of various kinds. John Sterling had gone to live near in the end of his life, and was

[1] "Imaginary Conversation between Southey and Porson," the 'London Magazine' for July 1823.

welcomed very warmly. "He is in very bad health, I am afraid," Mr White wrote. "I was glad to see him at work again in last number. He is very near me, and talks, I think, better than he writes, though he writes very well too." The following relates one of the vicissitudes of a seaside landlord and resident, and shows the active kindness of this good man's life:—

I have been so busy fighting with beasts at Ephesus and elsewhere that I have had not a moment's time. Last month, on the 22nd, a large ship ran ashore in a fog. It was the grandest sight I ever saw. She was outward bound for Jamaica, and had about twenty passengers. The villagers here immediately got into a fishing-coble and went on board. The captain set them all to work, and kept them pulling and heaving all night long to get her off—and all next day too, by which time lots of vessels and men had come from Portsmouth. My poor friends here, having no great eloquence or scholarship, had not a word to say for themselves, and the other people, who had not come for hours after them, claimed all the rewards. Whereupon I girt on all my armour like a true knight, and indited an epistle to the Portsmouth paper stating the facts. The captain countertaled, actually denying that the men had ever gone on board, though I saw them with these bodily eyes flying about upon bowsprits and clinging to yards in a manner only known to the half-smuggler, half-fisherman, who calls himself a "labourer" on this coast. I wrote to the owners, but they deny the story, on the strength of their captain's disclaimers. So the poor devils were first on board and worked all night, and then got nothing—not a sixpence! I have got their affidavits, and intend to shame the rascals.

I intend to be very copious next month, to make up for idleness in 'Maga's' service this.

Another name which occurs very frequently in the correspondence of the brothers at this period is that

of Alfred Mallalieu, apparently editor, or at least principal contributor, of various London papers, dating his letter from one newspaper office after another, and apparently also engaged in official work of some description in connection with the Foreign Office. His special department was politics and political economy, and his pretensions to superior knowledge were very high. The following description of his capabilities and intentions is pitched in a very high tone, and, we presume, with some justice, as he was evidently very highly thought of by the judicious and clear-sighted brothers, who were not men to be carried away by large talk. What these capabilities were, in his own opinion at least, is apparent in one of the earliest letters of the correspondence:—

A. Mallalieu to Messrs Blackwood.

15*th Dec.* 1835.

I have had to write half the article (the first half) over again through special intelligence only received then, which changed the complexion of the case. My opinion is, and I act upon it, that it is of no use to you, whatever profit it may be to me, to send you reasonings founded upon newspaper views and the common *on dits.* I could write you ten articles a-month in that style with less trouble than the one I send you. Facts, and facts unknown to others, are what tend to the advantage of 'Maga' and my reputation, or, what is more to the point, my own satisfaction—for out of the high circle of politics I am little known, and I have no ambition to be known as, and classed among, the gentlemen—the too-often raff — who indite pages in Magazines without knowing anybody, without a single original fact, and whose only object is to fill half a sheet and receive the stipulated quantity of pounds. What I send, you may depend upon for *facts.* The composition and arrangement I leave to you and the public to find fault with. I am independent pecuniarily of my own

party: *they know it;* and perhaps it adds to the confidence reposed in me.

For the translation of the pamphlet I refer to in my article I paid £3, 3s. It was so badly done, notwithstanding, that it cost me hours per day, when at the critical moment I wanted it, to go over it dictionary in hand. I do not want to charge you with it, but in return I hope you will not think me exorbitant in requesting half-a-dozen copies of 'Maga,' and 20 copies of the article separate, headed "from Blackwood, January," &c. I want to send two abroad: one to my friend Van Grighn, and two or three to ambassadors here. It will do you no harm. The slips of the article I shall distribute in influential quarters besides.

I would give you this advice—and I hope I do not appear officious—to send to the London newspapers along with their usual copy, the *loose sheets unmade up* (omitting one or two articles which are not likely to be quoted, so that there may be no inducement to *keep and bind up*), so that the editors may send them to the compositors' room for extracts and to be cut up. The editor likes to sport his copy. When I had papers I regularly sent them with extracts marked into the composing-room, from whence they were returned to me disfigured with printer's ink and dirty hands, as I have them to this day. The expense to you will be trifling, the advantage great. Fraser makes great exertions and sends a sheet round with extracts selected from various articles. That, I do not think, is a system so respectable, and it does not seem to have much effect. Pardon this suggestion: I am zealous in feeling when I commit myself, and I do not like to see 'Fraser' put into competition with 'Blackwood.' The writers of that periodical, so far as I hear of them, are but a sort of offscouring of parties.

This glimpse into the arcana of the press is strange and wonderful. The advice is much the same as that which Mr Alaric Watts, like Mr Mallalieu a man connected with many newspapers and learned in all the mysteries, gave to Mr William Blackwood. We

have no indication in either case if it was complied with at that time, though the practice has become general since. Here are a few other notes of Mr Mallalieu's opinions and views, in which a sort of calm superiority of universal knowledge is occasionally crossed by shrewd gleams of higher sense and intelligence. He had sent an article upon commercial laws, and regrets having to leave out something about "the factory population, which I had carefully reserved for my peroration":—

Its tone would have been *popular*, which when with our opinions we earn, we should never lose sight or omit to make the most of. We seldom have an opportunity, for our opponents bid so largely against us in that line. The article is not so good as I should have wished, therefore, but there are some curious and original facts in it which will tell among practical people, the trading interests, and the middle classes, with whom now more than ever I deem it a point to stand well. The old party-ground is slipping fast from under us, and it is necessary to accommodate ourselves partially to new tastes, circumstances, and classes, as Sir Robert Peel politically does, without, however, losing sight of old friends and principles, which for many years to come must always be our mainstay. Still we must be blind, indeed, not to see that power has changed hands, and surely we of the Conservative middle classes are fully as well able and well entitled to wield it as our fellows of the Whig Radical stamp. The worst is the aristocracy, with customary infatuation, will not open their eyes, but persist to believe that we labour for them alone, when in fact and with cause we are preparing hereafter to take part in the Government with them. These sentiments I do not disguise in my intercourse with some of them; for it is necessary to accustom them to the idea.

I am much obliged by your kind opinion about my article. I noted the wholesale robbery of the 'Times': that is just the way they always have acted, and by which alone they achieved their reputation for good information. They carefully treasure up for

months all the striking parts of various periodicals at home and abroad, and then, when they imagine people have forgotten some or all from length of time, bring them forth in one concentrated article or more. This time they were earlier in their robbery than usual, and of course more people will detect them. The 'Quarterly' I have not seen, but they are all alike.

If nothing political intervenes of importance, I think of doing something more on foreign commerce for your next, if agreeable. But I shall commence nothing for ten days, so as to be free for events. The Canada affair is not ripe yet. The Spanish is a delicate business, for you have been very strong for Don Carlos heretofore. Perhaps I know as much about Spain and Spanish affairs as any man in England: at least Zea Bermudez [?] used to say so, and Lord Aberdeen to think so. No line will do but that of compromise—upholding Don Carlos only to make better terms for him. The right of succession is just as broad as long, for one party as the other. I have laws plenty to prove the right of either. I know the Bishop of Leon, but it has not suited me to go near him for months, because one cannot very well visit without becoming partisans to some extent. By-and-by we must take up South America, which will introduce you to something of a new connexion. In 1823 and 1825 I was private secretary to two South American legations, and should therefore know something of these countries.

There is a satisfaction in following a superior being, who has been everywhere and knows everything, about the world, even through statistics and details of commercial law. Mr Mallalieu continued to be a valued contributor for many years, indeed as long as the reign of the elder brothers lasted. His political views, no doubt, were perfectly sound, but he occasionally gives forth words such as we do not expect to see in the pages of 'Blackwood.' These however, fortunately, were but in private letters. "What could we expect," he says on the stroke of a political catastrophe, "from a miserable set of Tory

skinflints, all for themselves, and frightened of connecting themselves with the very intellect by which alone they have been and could be supported?" We remember that Mr William Blackwood himself spoke very severely of the want of support from the Tory party, and its timidity, if not cowardice, in respect to literary undertakings, or we should take this for treasonable talk.

In Edinburgh the ranks of the contributors were increased by Mr (afterwards Lord) Neaves, whose lively and delightful verses continued to appear in the Magazine to a very recent day; and by Mr George Moir, both Edinburgh advocates at that time, and both full of fun and jollity, though the latter was sometimes a contributor of strong political articles such as 'Maga' loved. I find a copy of verses, on the model of the "Meeting of the Waters," in one of Mr Moir's letters, narrating a Radical meeting which had just taken place, which are worthy of the very best days of the 'Noctes,' full of spirit and grace. But this is not the kind of thing, perhaps, by which he would have desired to be remembered. Dr Croly continued a steady and always trustworthy contributor, doing his work as required, and keeping up to date as old contributors do to whom the exigencies of the printing-office and the anxieties of publishers are known. The Professor continued, as he had always been, the charm and the cross of 'Maga'—sometimes writing nothing for months together, perpetually having one sheet, two sheets, kept blank for him to the last moment, never to be relied upon, yet fondly believed in, and received, when at last his manuscript appeared, with something like adoration. I have

quoted enough from every quarter to show that this was not the feeling of the Saloon and the printing-office alone (which put his name after those of Shakespeare and Dante), but was entertained by the world in general and all the literary organs of the time, to whom the incomparable Christopher was the object of continual laudation. Perhaps a man cannot get so much from his own age and at the same time from the hands of posterity. His work was more like that of an orator than a writer, and carried away, as living eloquence does, even the unwilling listener. We have lost in these days the sound of his voice, which, when it was lifted, filled the spheres. It rarely happened that an article from him did not at once make "a splendid number." Nevertheless 'Maga' went on and held her own, even when the Professor's blank sheet had to be filled up with the lucubrations of more ordinary mortals.

The most important of the contributors of this period were no doubt Alison and Warren, two men as unlike each other as could be conceived. Alison's great book was being published in successive volumes, and, large and cumbrous though it was, met with a constant and steady sale, as happens to some books which are the books of their time, even though their literary qualities are not of the first order. In the midst of this steady work and success, not to speak of his professional labours, Alison continued a constant contributor to the Magazine. It is extraordinary to be brought face to face with such a remarkable power of work continued over so many years, in which the workman never appears to fail or tire, but carries on his ceaseless production almost with the regularity of

a machine. We have already in the earlier part of this book had to remark upon the multiplicity of his labours, but that was before he had begun those laborious works which were enough to have occupied any man's undivided attention, much less the mere leisure time of an active law official occupied sometimes in his court, as he tells us, eight or nine hours a-day. Before attempting to show the reader how this enormous production went on, I must pause to note the generous and cordial gratitude and friendship with which this most successful writer in the full tide of his triumph remembered the kind and fostering hand which had first opened to him the door of literary success. It was in reply to the compliments of Alexander Blackwood on the popularity of a new volume, that the now famous historian sent the following letter :—

Archibald Alison to Alexander Blackwood.

I am much gratified by your cordial congratulations on the success of the work, which has much exceeded, at least in so short a time, my most sanguine expectations. I only regret that your excellent father did not live to see the success of an author, then unknown, whom he undertook to support in so liberal and enterprising a manner, and to whose early efforts he so powerfully contributed the invaluable benefit of his aid and encouragement. I shall always entertain a grateful sense of his conduct to me on that as well as on all other occasions, and from that feeling no less than from my own sense of the corresponding liberality and punctuality with which you have acted towards me on all occasions of our long intercourse, it affords me no small pleasure to think that the benefit may in some degree be mutual, and that if Sergeant Talfourd's Bill[1] passes it may on successive editions prove the same benefit to

[1] The Copyright Act.

you and your heirs as it will to me and mine. I am getting on with the eighth volume, and shall add nothing to the fifth and sixth except a few paragraphs in the chapter on Finance, principally to bring the figures down to this time, which is always an object in statistical tables, for which purpose you may send me the sheets of that chapter when the press reaches the fifth volume.

This, which Alexander calls "a handsome letter," was received with great pleasure. "Few people would have felt as he does, but would rather have grudged us the profits of the work which we share with him." It is seldom, however, I think, the successful writer who grudges the publisher his share. Alison's immense industry and wide range of subjects are almost more visible in his notes about Magazine articles than the steady going of the big book, which moves on steadily like a clock. "As I have delayed you so much with Commerce, Finance, and Figures lately," he writes, referring probably to some articles on Currency, "we had better give a change in the next number. What say you to a Review of Beaumont and against Irish Romanism for the next number, and a paper on the war in Affghanistan for the one after; or which would you prefer, or have you room for either?" He decides finally on quite a different subject, that of "the Corn Laws as they affect the commercial interests of the country," a subject then beginning to fill all minds, as it seems to be about to do again. In addition to all these labours, both permanent and occasional, he was bringing out at the same time the two solid volumes of his work on Population. Here is a marvellous view of the workshop and the driving of the wheels which brought such masses of literary matter into being—

not that iron machinery which has made the fortunes of so many men in the great city, Glasgow, from which he wrote, and where he was the official representative of the majesty of law, but all working in one brain :—

POSSIL HOUSE, *April* 2, 1840.

I yesterday got out my first proof of the 8th volume, and returned it corrected to throw off, so that Ballantyne has been very expeditious.

Upon further consideration, I rather think it would be advisable only to print one volume of the 'Population' at once, and go continuously through both volumes. If two were printing at the same time along with the 8th volume, it might subject me to too severe a strain, and possibly lead to one of the three presses standing for a few days—a thing of all others to be most deprecated, especially with that conducting the History; as my great object is to get it out by the end of May, and a fortnight or three weeks before the other, to which, especially from the tenor of the first chapter, it will form no inappropriate introduction.

You may rely upon my exerting myself to the utmost to keep the presses in motion.

Three presses to be kept in motion, and the risk of one standing still for a few days, the thing in the world to be most deprecated! Some of us have done a great deal of work in our day, but we doubt if any one living could equal this.

I have to-day finished and sent off the whole MS. of 'Population' [he says a short time after], including preliminary matter, preface, and appendix to both volumes. They will be between 540 and 550 pages each; and though I do not expect at first anything like the sale or interest of my History, I am sanguine enough to hope that ere long that work will interest a still wider class, and be deemed to contain more original and important Thought. The moment I can get time [he adds] I will write an article for the Magazine; but as I have for the first

time in my life incurred a small arrear in my judicial business here from the severe pressure of the last three months, I fear it will not be forthcoming till the August number.

When the work came out, and the din of the three presses was no longer in the author's ears, another important matter, that of a reviewer to take up the book in the Magazine, had to be thought of, and several persons of importance were proposed by the anxious author, who would understand and do justice to the subject. Failing the names which he mentioned, Mr Alison suggested that "perhaps you might know something of a young man better qualified." "A man," he adds, "from 30 to 40 would be more eligible than an older one; for persons past middle life will hardly ever embrace new doctrines." The work was finally confided to Dr Croly, that old hand and trustworthy, who discharged the commission to the author's complete satisfaction.

This was merely, however, a little interlude, and the History continued the chief point in Alison's many occupations. He seems while completing the last volumes to have been at the same time revising and correcting for this and that new edition, especially the first two volumes, to which he attributes the greatest popularity in consequence of the tragic and exciting events of the French Revolution, with which they dealt, but which appeared to him deficient in style and expression. To carry on thus the correction of one part while completing the other, was about as hard a task as a man could set himself, especially under such circumstances as the following:—

October 4, 1840.

Since the 12th August the Registration Court has sat for

eight or nine hours each day without the intermission of a single day except the Scientific Association week, when, from having the house full of strangers, I could get nothing done. This dreadful labour has almost totally obstructed my History during this period, but it will terminate about the 13th or 14th, and on the day it closes I will begin your article. I have a good deal written of the ix. volume in spite of every obstacle, and work regularly every evening now, though you may conceive the effort of doing so after sitting eight hours in court speaking or writing without intermission. But I don't think I could safely begin to print before Christmas.

The success of the History was extraordinary. When everything else was languid, it continued to sell. "A number of people," says young John Blackwood, then just beginning to take an active share in business, "seem to say to themselves every two or three days, 'Come, let's have a set;'" and a set was no small matter, not lightly to be undertaken by those who had a limited purse or limited bookshelves. It became a work which no gentleman's library could do without. The picturesque style of history-writing had scarcely begun in those days. There was no Macaulay as yet, who was about the first of the new order of historians; and though some brilliant pages had come from the pen of the Napiers, these were partially distrusted, or at least hesitated over, on account chiefly of that very brilliancy. It was the part of a writer of history to write gravely, and with a certain solemnity of rhetoric. And not only the book-buying public, whose verdict is in so many cases the final one, but the highest authority of the day, placed their imprimatur upon the new History—even political opponents, to whom the name of Blackwood was like a trumpet of defiance. It is a

proof of the softening which had taken place in the heart of political animosity that the review which pleased the Tory historian most came from the Whig organ under the old detested colours of the Buff and Blue :—

Dec. 18, 1842.

I cannot tell you how much I was gratified by the 'Edinburgh' review of my History. I shall not fail to weigh it anxiously, and correct many things which require amendment. I consider the review in the highest degree fair and impartial, and deserving in every point of view of the most respectful consideration. In the criticisms on the style, and, above all, the frequent repetitions of the same reflections, I almost always concur; and I shall strike out all passages having a similar tendency in a revised edition. In the fifth volume, as you will see, I am correcting very carefully. If I can find time to-morrow I intend to write a letter to Macvey Napier to forward to the author of the review, thanking him for its elaborate criticism and courteous spirit, and I shall enclose it open for your perusal to forward to him.

I have ascertained from Lord Belhaven that he was mistaken in the account he had got that Lord Mahon wrote the review in the 'Quarterly' [not so favourable]; and I have no doubt it was, as you say, the joint production of Croker and Greenwood. Indeed the internal evidence of their authorship is strong—the former from the venom of the style, the latter from the frequent allusions to himself. The review in the 'Edinburgh' was, I believe, written by Empson, Jeffrey's son-in-law. As soon as I can get time I will write to Macvey Napier expressing my entire satisfaction with the review, and I daresay he will tell me who the author is; but he is clearly a very able man.

It says much for Alison's candour that he received the remarks on his style, which is generally the last thing a man of letters can bear, so meekly—a magnanimity scarcely to be expected when the review was at the same time a Whig one. The following shows

whimsically the justice which his good taste could not refuse to do to a rival's qualities, along with the horror still existing against the perverse principles of that symbol of all evil :—

January 19, 1845.

I said no more of Napier than I thought he deserved for his description of battles, but I will give him no more praise in my next volume, as he is so surly towards me, and give him a broadside in a note on the subject of his late attack. Could you get me a copy of his brother's Life of Sir John, as I cannot get one here—and I hear it contains letters admitting that he was a Whig in opinion?

Admitting that he was a Whig! What confession could be more damning?

Alison, however, important and serious author though he was, was not above the editing of the conductors of the Magazine, who had inherited, among other gifts from their father, this, of being no respecter of persons, but keeping the reins of their 'Maga' firmly in their hands, and holding fast above all things to that which was suitable both in subject and in space. There was but one man for whom these limitations did not exist, and that was more, I suspect, because they had been brought up upon Christopher North, and almost invariably thought and felt with him. Otherwise, even the Sheriff, of whom they had so much reason to be proud, the author of one of the principal books of his age, had to bow his crest before these inexorable rulers. He had written, almost for him with a little enthusiasm, about an article he had made on the mysterious and awful subject of the Currency. He thought that its arguments were unanswerable, and that Government itself could not fail to be

affected by it. When it was suggested to him that it must be shortened, that one branch of his argument must be cut away in order to bring it to the requisite number of pages, even his sober temper was moved, and he made a strong stand for his work. This proved, however, to be in vain—probably the editors did not find it so convincing as the author, but the reason put forth seems to have been that of space and necessity. Alison submitted, but it was not with a very good grace. "I send the Currency article," he says, "cut down to exactly 18 pages, as you wish."

Of course, being deprived of the most material part of the argument, and the whole tables which alone could give it weight with thinking men, we cannot expect it to produce any effect on Government or to be of any service in averting the catastrophe with which Scotland[1] is threatened. But it may lead some inconsiderate persons to study the subject who would be terrified by the sight of the tables, and I am not insensible to the risk of an article of 26 pages on such a subject being reckoned a dead weight in your Magazine.

I took it up with the greatest reluctance, being well aware of the impossibility of treating it in a way suitable for your Magazine, and chiefly in consequence of earnest entreaties from the Agricultural Protection people in England. I shall not, however, again engage on any subject of political economy, and have kept the concluding eight pages of tables, that when the essay appears in my miscellaneous works, of which it will form an important part, it may contain the grounds on which it is founded, and appear in a form which may not be discreditable to the author.

In the meantime, though the most material part of the argument is cut out, what remains is complete as far as it goes. If I had retained any of what follows it would have been unintelligible, and deemed absurd if the whole had not been given with the tables.

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[1] One of the periodical attacks upon the Scots banking system.

We cannot but think it very remarkable that two young men, neither of them men of letters, should have gained so much influence and respect as to have subdued writers like Alison, and exercised in so singular a way—always cool, courteous, and friendly—an almost absolute control over the contributions which they received from all quarters and from all conditions of men. They had not even, except in inheritance from him, their father's prestige as the founder of the most successful periodical of its time, nor his experience and intimate knowledge of the men with whom they had to do. And they were two, not one, and might therefore be imagined at least to have occasionally divided counsels. But William Blackwood himself was not more determined nor more successful in making his power felt than his two successors, who, if they ever had difference of opinion, never showed it, and acted as one with a unity and solidarity—if the word may be used in English—of the most extraordinary kind. Whether the letters were addressed to Alexander or Robert mattered nothing: there does not seem, so far as the business was concerned, to be anything visible even of that division of labour which is usually thought convenient in such circumstances. My own impression was, that Alexander had more of the intellectual work and Robert of the business transactions. But I do not find my surmise to be founded on reality. As a matter of fact, they were one: either conducted the correspondence as was most convenient; there were no limits of this man's or that man's province. In the guidance of the Magazine, as in that of the family, they acted as one, and as one they were obeyed—whether by

the schoolboy brothers, to whom the two were but a more familiar father, wielders of authority never doubted, or by the serious and respectable writers, old and of more weight and authority in the world than themselves, who bowed their heads like the rest, and permitted, not without outcries on the part of the voluble, or such proud and aggrieved submission as that which shows in Alison's letter, yet did permit their most cherished periods to be suppressed, and their articles trimmed and shaped, at the young Editors' will. I do not know anything more remarkable in literary history.

Mr Warren was one of those who cried out with shrieks that rent the air, but he also yielded to the mild but prevailing persuasion. Warren's long and close correspondence is very tempting material indeed to a biographer. He was one of those men whose unconcealed—nay, outspoken—vanity is much more innocent than the self-esteem of far more prudent men. He says straight out, with many dramatic exclamations and outbursts of self-applause, what many of us no doubt feel in our inmost bosoms, but keep concealed, perhaps at worse risks to our moral nature; and his weaknesses were all most transparent and borne on his front, so that the critic had no need to seek for them, but found them ready to his hand. The success of his two chief works was more like the extraordinary and factitious successes we see nowadays than the more sober triumphs of his period, and promised for a time to rival Dickens in the approbation of that strange public whose vagaries are not to be accounted for, and whose tastes so many writers study in vain. But the fount of his

inspiration, such as it was, ran quickly dry. After the 'Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician' in 1832, which had caught the attention of the multitude in a remarkable degree, there was a long pause, and it is not till 1839—one of the most active and brilliant years of the Blackwood brotherhood—that we find him carrying on with much *éclat* and great delight to himself his novel of 'Ten Thousand a-Year,' which indeed seems to have fully justified his own estimate of its merits by the eager reception accorded to it. The following is the first intimation of the work which was Warren's *chef-d'œuvre*, and, as he warmly believed and hoped, was to bring him everlasting fame:—

9th September 1839.

Please to reserve a sheet for me in the October number, for the 1st part of 'Ten Thousand a-Year.' I thought out the idea that has long been floating in my mind yesterday (at church, I am sorry to say), and I have at a heat already written off half the paper. I feel convinced you will like it much.

I have succeeded in pleasing *myself* very much. The chapter opens with a poor Dandy's toilet, his soliloquy—a vivid sketch of his extreme embarrassments; so that it may afford an effective contrast to the dazzling door of fortune that is about to open to him.

Alexander wrote in reply, delighted with the opening of the story, but delayed responding for a day or two. "My brother was in the country," he says; and he delayed to make sure that Robert's opinion coincided with his own, which fortunately it did. The new work was received with tremendous plaudits everywhere, according to the description of the author. "Did you see the 'Times' of yesterday? Glorious!" cries the triumphant writer. "I assure

you that it has made quite a sensation, but it has brought a deluge of asserters to me that I am the author. I strenuously deny it to every one."

"Sir Frederick Pollock was one of those who challenged me. He said, 'Well, whoever it may be, I can assure you that yesterday some very able judges were dining with me, and asked me if I had read "Ten Thousand a-Year," and said that a single page was worth all that Dickens had ever written. I agree with them. Who can it be?' These were his very words." Other people besides thought it "superior to Boz." "I was at Lockhart's yesterday," young John Blackwood wrote from London, "and without my having alluded to it he expressed the most decided approbation for 'Ten Thousand a-Year.' He said it was evidently a first-rate man, and, in his opinion, beat Boz hollow — anyway, was fully his match." Posterity has, however, we fear, scarcely adopted this opinion.

The author had been very prosperous in the beginning of his legal career — so much so, that he wrote: "I am exceeding my utmost expectations at the bar. Since the 17th November (1837), on which day I was called to the bar, I have made 24 guineas a-week in ordinary steady business, and above all have received a retainer in the City of London Conservative Election Petition—a thing which, if I acquit myself well, will bring me constantly before the Public in a very high position, and introduce me possibly to the most lucrative line of business." We fear, however, that the dash into literature and the days passed at home in a feverish ardour of composition, as he records again and again, must

have been prejudicial to these high hopes; for we find him, a little later on, going drearily on circuit, with very few briefs to mitigate the weariness of these unwilling peregrinations, during which, however, he composed several parts of his story, and took great comfort, in his banishment from the joys and comforts of London, in the wonderful glory and success which attended his exertions in another sphere.

"The new number," he writes from the Court, Newcastle-on-Tyne, "is indeed a capital one. The articles on Coleridge and the Vote of Confidence are particularly to my mind. Does not the new number of *a certain other paper* read charmingly? I am quite delighted with it, and shall be surprised if it do not take with the public, though I am sadly afraid I shall be found out." The fear of being found out, indeed, haunted Warren throughout these triumphant years, though his secret was an open secret which everybody knew, and had been from the first confided to many admiring friends. "I have not had an instant's leisure at Newcastle," he adds. "Here [Durham] I hope to have some, and purpose beginning Part VI. this very day. I have thought out a good deal of it; but here and at York (the scene of the events) I shall have more leisure." He was still on the same *tournée* at Liverpool when he wrote again as follows:—

S. Warren to Alexander Blackwood.

26th March 1840.

I was truly delighted in going this morning to the post-office to find your two letters—in the first of which you speak in such highly gratifying terms concerning the new part. My dear B.,

I *knew* you would all like it, for it is most true to human nature, and it cost me (though you may smile) a few tears while writing it. How I do love the Aubreys! How my heart yearns towards them!

> "What sorrows yet may pierce them through
> Before the coming year."

I am delighted that I shall once more head the gallant ranks of 'Maga.'

A little further on the author has to defend his work against a hint that the story lagged a little, and got "no forrarder"—proceeding from Alexander Blackwood, on whose more fastidious taste many things in the work jarred:—

I shall be sorry if the public joins with you in regretting the slow progress of the story. Remember that mine is not a story depending for its interest on *incident*—although quite enough is given from time to time to sustain the interest and curiosity of the reader. The great object of the story is the *patient*, *close*, and *true* portraiture of *character* and *feeling*. I am no hand whatever at stringing together a number of incidents. Surely, however, the new chapter contains a very important step in the story—namely, the solemn and final exclusion of the Aubreys from Yatton; and the manner in which each party bears his fate in circumstances of joy and triumph, of grief and trouble, *appreciable by all classes of readers*, who as they go on cannot fail to realise it to themselves, must fully compensate for the want of a series of exciting incidents. The series certainly seem to have taken completely, and I venture to predict that you will not hear any complaint of the slow progress of the story so long as the parties are placed in new positions, developing fresh pictures of character and display of feeling.

This, we venture to think, is very excellent doctrine, and worthy of the attention of the many students of fiction, who receive much advice less

likely to be of use to them. Our author goes on in another letter:—

I fancy I shall be splendidly successful in this number, in which I am anxious to do my utmost. In or about November all the legal profession, with their immense connexions and dependencies, will have come up to town, and I wish them to see how brilliantly we start. I am of opinion that in the new Part—what shall I say?—I have pleased *myself* every atom as much as ever. Perhaps you will like it better even than anything that has gone before,—Titmouse in his splendid cab; his progress in high life; a sketch of Count d'Orsay (under the Marquis de Millefleurs[1]), whose whim it was that made Titmouse the lion he was represented at the end of the last chapter; a splendid portrait of the Rev. Morphine Velvet, a fashionable preacher in a fashionable chapel of ease, &c., &c., &c.

We need not give the summary of the scenes that follow, for we fear many people have forgotten 'Ten Thousand a-Year.' "Kettle and William Smith are in the greatest delight with what I have done," Warren adds at the end of his letter. Presently, however, there occurs an episode which, as it is a remarkable and amusing instance of Alexander Blackwood's moral and mental influence, and at once of the exultation and dismay, but reasonableness and humble-mindedness, under all, of the tried author, I may give in detail. It is in respect to the disputed election which occurs in the end of the book, with which the writer was delighted but the publisher not so.

7th January 1841.

It was only last night that I began my new chapter. I shall

[1] "I hate his beastly names," says Alexander Blackwood, with disgust, in a letter to his brother.

now paint an election to my own perfect satisfaction. I don't mean the mere external humours of one, which have been done a million times; but as one has never hitherto been painted. I mean *real*, the philosophy and the fact of elections, the true agencies at work, as by manœuvring, management, bribery, &c., &c. Gammon on one side, and Mr Crafty, a skilful electioneering agent, on the other. How these two admirable heads really fight the whole battle under cover of the humbug of the usual popular display of bands, placards, canvassing, &c. It will be hard, true, exciting; for I am going to make the election uncertain to the last moment. Then comes the election committee, and I will show them up *in fine style.*

It is possible that a sense of having been over bold may have struck the exultant author, for he strengthens himself with another legal opinion before he sends it away:—

18*th January* 1841.

This morning I have sent off my packet, and a splendid number it will be.

I have just had a long conversation with Sir F. Pollock on the character and tendency of the paper, and it is impossible to overestimate the expectations he has formed of it, as at once *quite original;* deeply interesting; giving valuable information; and helping to do more to report the vicious system of election petitions (which all unite in reprehending) than a thousand debates.

And how it would advance our party interests! and also the story, which now draws to a climax. Pray write by return. I have never been more anxious, delightfully anxious, about anything I ever wrote. There has never been any attempt like this in literature before. And if I can but get it out just as the House meets!

Let the reader conceive the disappointment and mortification of a writer so entirely satisfied that he had done well, and that his work would dazzle the world, when he received his early copy of the Maga-

zine with his great election scene left out! There seems to have been no question of proofs, for Warren was one of the men who was late with his manuscript, writing each instalment (as every young author will perceive with horror and take care not to imitate) at the last possible moment as it became due. The letter which explained the dreadful omission does not seem to have been preserved, but apparently suggested that the omission was upon the possibility of its being libellous. His first letter after this catastrophe was wonderfully moderate in tone, though he was afterwards worked up into a more impassioned state of mind :—

I should not act with that straightforwardness which has hitherto characterised all our intercourse were I not to say that the non-appearance of the remainder of the article, accompanied by certain expressions and your note explanatory of the reasons for its non-appearance, occasioned me intense chagrin and bitter disappointment. First of all, had you but seen the exertion it cost me to complete the article, and which completely prostrated me for some days after, you would excuse the feelings I describe. Again, the last scene—I mean the whole of that leading to the act descriptive of the election committee—has been gradually concocted in my mind for many months. I had put forth on it all the little strength I had. I had consulted upon it the highest authority to whom I had confidential access. I was thereby warranted in believing that my paper would produce a very great sensation, and, moreover, safely and with very great benefit to your Magazine, and also with a chance of doing a vast deal towards exposure of a crying evil admitted by all parties—viz., the mode of electing the committees; of balloting, and the kind of conduct to which it leads, which all in the slightest degree acquainted with the subject will know was understated in my article. Again, I had a little exceeded bounds in point of extent, I own, but it was in the hope that when you heard it was to get over a vast deal of ground you would once more have

received it. And I had already arranged in my mind a completely new state of facts so as to shorten the story and hasten the *dénouement*. On all these grounds my deep regret is perfectly justifiable.

On the other hand, don't think me for an instant stupid enough to think of attempting to question your undoubted *right* to act as you may think best for the interests of the Magazine. I fully and cheerfully recognise it; doubtless the fault is mine, and consequently the mortification of my own infliction.

As for Lord Brougham, I agree with you, and am on the whole glad that you struck out the stinging portion of the passages alluding to him. But on what ground do you object to the portion unprinted? Do you fear being called up to the Bar of the House? To me it appears *perfectly absurd* to imagine that any one of the parties aimed at would come forward amid the inextinguishable laughter of the country and own that the cap fits. However, I have to-day laid the matter before Thesiger (the man best fitted in the kingdom to judge), in order that he may read the whole and give me his deliberate judgment. Sir W. Follett has also promised to do the same, and will have the papers next to Thesiger (Sir W. F. told me he had, with all his engagements, read every line of all the series yet published, with the highest delight, and so has Sir F. Pollock). At present they all laugh at the idea of your apprehending mischief. Now, what I beg you to do is to drop me a line by return saying, whether in the event of Sir F. Pollock, Sir W. Follett, and Mr Thesiger approving of the paper, and of my yielding implicitly to any suggestion they may make, and making such changes as may remove, in my opinion and theirs, all grounds of apprehension such as those which you now seem to entertain, you will allow the next paper to commence with that already in proof? Because if not, I must act with the serious decision on the matter which it will require and which I invite you to display.

Having thus written himself up into a much less amiable humour than that with which he began, Warren proceeded to collect and forward the opinions of his friends:—

I snatch a moment to inform you that Sir F. Pollock and Mr Thesiger have each separately considered the matter submitted to them, neither of them knowing that it was to be submitted to the other, and have both of them—(1st) declared that the February chapter is incomparably the best that has yet appeared, and (2nd) that the unpublished portion is "admirable," says Thesiger; and "inimitable," says Pollock. Both also, without any suggestion of mine, said the same thing on which I placed reliance in writing the article—viz., that inasmuch as the balloting for the committee was abolished last session, my description is a matter of mere historical interest; and there is no pretence on earth for supposing that it can be libellous, inasmuch as it alludes to a bad state of things, abolished because it was admitted to be bad. They both, on hearing your scruples, have suggested one or two alterations, to remove all possible harm.

I assure you upon my honour that they both spoke of the design and execution of the unpublished part in as high terms as man could adopt,—"Not a tittle of it should be lost to the public and to posterity." Under these circumstances I shall immediately set about making such alterations as shall render it perfectly safe, and then I presume you *can* have no objections to its appearing.

According to the dates, this letter was written on the 30th January; but this must be incorrect, since the reply of Alexander Blackwood is dated from Edinburgh the 29th of that month.

Alexander Blackwood to S. Warren.

From the late hour at which the mail arrived on Monday night, it was not in my power to answer your letter by return of post. I do not regret this, however, as I do not see that the mere reply to your query as regards the opinions of Thesiger and Pollock would answer the object you have in view.

You are, I am sure, aware that it is always with great diffidence that either my brother or I offer our views to you, or any of our friends, with regard to what they may be writing

for the Magazine. We have, on the contrary, always been of opinion that an author should be left to do things in his own way. There are, however, occasions when it becomes a duty to offer advice, and I hope it is generally taken in the spirit in which it is offered, a sincere desire to promote that author's success. It was with great regret that we were obliged to stop short, and I learn with still greater regret that it has been a matter of disappointment to you.

You are mistaken in supposing that it was merely the fear of running any hazard that is our only objection to the election committee scene. In my somewhat hurried note I merely noticed that as one objection. My idea was that in seeing it printed you would probably yourself see others. I am greatly concerned that you should have been long engaged on this scene, and that you consider it in a way essential to the success of your tale. In this opinion we cannot concur, and, so far from doing so, consider that it would have the contrary effect. In a word, we do not think you have been happy in the way you have handled the subject; and as you are yourself anxious to hasten the *dénouement*, it is the very thing you should leave out.

Notwithstanding the opinions you quote, I should say that unless the whole scene is very much altered it is unsuited for the Magazine. As regards the future success of the book in a separate issue, I have still stronger objections to this scene. It will do no good, and may do a great deal of mischief.

This trenchant sentence called forth from Warren the following solemn and somewhat tragical reply:—

WESTMINSTER, COURTS OF EXCHEQUER,
2nd February 1841.

I have just had your letter handed to me in court here. What effect may have been produced on your mind by a letter which you must have received since you wrote it, I don't know.

I do earnestly trust, my dear Blackwood, that our long and, I may surely say, affectionate intercourse will not be interrupted by any serious misunderstanding.

As for me, you know how on former occasions I have submitted to your wishes with reference to these very papers, having at least twice given way to you in matters which exceedingly annoyed me.

But permit me to tell you candidly that on the present occasion I am fully as sensible of what is justly due to myself as of what is due to you. I have hitherto, single-handed and with terrible exertions, conducted this series of papers, you must admit, to a point of great success and popularity. Why am I to suppose that all of a sudden, and that too on an important occasion, I am not a sufficient judge? I have consulted two of the most gifted and skilful judges of the kingdom as to the portion you have not printed; *and why do you regret my doing so?* Am I not at liberty to do it, and on such an occasion as this? Are you to have the option, you only, of saying This shall or shall not appear? If you say so, the course is very plain for both of us to pursue; and sure am I that I shall not be one whit less resolute in what my judgment tells me (fortified as I am by the authorities whom I have implored to give me their opinion, with a view directly to your interests as well as to mine) is the course required by my sense of what is due to myself to be pursued than you.

You do not favour me EVEN YET with the faintest intimation of your grounds of opposition to the election committee scene, at which, permit me to say, I am both surprised and hurt. What am I to do? You say you are not afraid of consequences: do you think that if that[1] should happen which I know never *will* happen, I would play the part O'Connell did to Barrett?

Besides, the highest authorities tell you through me that there is no danger whatever; and I shall act upon their recommendation. What other objections have you? Is it kind or candid in you, when your attention is challenged to the matter so anxiously and respectfully as it has been by me, simply to write to say "unless the whole scene is altered it is not fitted for the Magazine"? I cannot understand your sentence, for if it be "entirely changed" then the point is given up, and all you

[1] A trial for libel.

say is that if I cancel all I have written and write something totally different, it will be fit for insertion. Now permit me to say in a word, and that written advisedly, to show how far I am disposed to go (not a hair beyond what a just spirit of independence on my part will permit of). I will change the character of Lord Bullfinch with some understrapper, such as Ellice or some one who could not be identified; and delete that portion which you may, for aught I know, fancy dangerous—viz., the direct agency of O'Gibbet in securing the committee. Further than this I, making such minor variations as may suggest themselves to me, *will not go*, and if you do not write and tell me that with such concessions as these you will print what I wish in the opening of Part XVI., I shall give myself no more trouble about the matter, and with the February number ends the series in your Magazine. I know you will smile when you read this, because probably it is myself alone whom I am injuring. To that I have made up my mind, and you can in any way you think fit indicate to the public the event.

My conscience tells me that I am right in what I am doing. I have done all I could to secure your interest in enjoining such men as Sir W. Follett, Sir J. Pollock, and Mr Thesiger to give me their best advice for YOU and ME; and for the rest, why should I give away rather than you?

I propose, however, the concessions I have already alluded to, and wait your reply. Till then I shall leave matters precisely as they are; and if your answer is in the negative, I beg you will make your arrangements for the next numbers without any reference to the further continuation of '£10,000 a-Year.'

We read these letters with something of the ease of mind and relieved, amused consciousness that it is to come to nothing, with which we go back upon the tragic chapters of a novel which we know ends quite happily. Lord Bullfinch in the disputed scene was Lord John Russell, and O'Gibbet of course O'Connell. Alexander's objection expressed to his brothers had

been the entire spirit of the scene, and the raking up of old animosities and party wounds scarcely yet healed which it might bring about; and probably he was able to represent this so as to arouse the impulsive generosity of the writer, whose very asseverations, as above given, reveal the guise of the man, who is by no means so sure of himself as he professes to be, but the letter is not to be found. A few days later we find, however, that the tremendous rupture had been averted. On neither side could it have been permitted to be carried further. The Magazine to appear without its famous and popular serial, the eager writer, so much in love with his own fame, to drop into silence, would have been as if Arthur's Seat, or at least, let us say, Primrose Hill, had been rent in twain. A very few days after, accordingly (February 5), Warren acknowledges a letter "dated the 3rd instant," which "has set matters entirely to rights between us." Notwithstanding his vanity his heart was very open to any cordial touch, and it is clear, even when he fought for "what was dear to himself," that the real man in him was more ready to yield than to take up arms against his friend. Even when he had bolstered himself round with legal authorities and wound himself up to a great and cruel determination, the thought of the "old and affectionate intercourse," now about to be broken, was more than he could bear. "All will now go on well," he cries in the satisfaction and relief of his soul. "Rely on it, I will take the greatest possible pains to make this portion unexceptionable in every point of view, and also to make a good Part XVI." Though one knows beforehand that no harm came of it, yet one cannot help

feeling with Warren the elation of the storm dispersed. "I assure you," he says, nature springing up again with the usual buoyancy, "that I have heard nothing from any quarter but the highest commendation." He could now wave his triumphant flag again with a free heart. A few months later we find him bemoaning the "extreme exhaustion" caused by "the effort I made in finishing my last paper." "I hope and trust," he says, "its excellence will console *me* for my exertions, and in some measure compensate *you* for your trouble and inconvenience. Have not I gathered up the whole story completely, and is not poor Gammon's end calculated to satisfy expectation?"

A letter in the end of the year, addressed to "dear Johnny," concludes this amusing history of the genesis and qualities of the once famous novel, in a whimsical way. I do not know whether it was his own idea to bind and preserve the manuscript or that of the editors, but he directs it to be done with four or five blank leaves — "for the title-page, dedication, and preface."

And will you let the following be written by one of you on the first page, and signed by all three of you, leaving a space for my own signature?—*This volume and the accompanying one consists of the original manuscript of 'Ten Thousand a-Year,' as furnished to 'Blackwood's Magazine' entirely in the handwriting of the author, Mr Samuel Warren.*

ALEXANDER BLACKWOOD,
ROBERT BLACKWOOD,
JOHN BLACKWOOD, } *Publishers.*

And I shall write under Samuel Warren, *Author.* And you will please to add the date. 'Tis a mere piece of fancy and curiosity, and which I wish to be a bit of an heirloom.

The idea was pretty and kindly in the author's

triumphant way. "This is invaluable," he says afterwards, "just as a memento of our personal kindness; then as an authentic declaration and evidence of the connection you three and I have together; and lastly, as a permanent, and to me very affecting, record of hundreds of hours of most intense and not unprofitable or discreditable toil."

The correspondence became less amusing and dramatic after the conclusion of this great work; but many circumstances combined to draw the friendship between the Blackwood family and that of Warren very close, and his connection with the Magazine continued, in the way of occasional articles, for years. If not quite so versatile as the other writers who turned their hand to anything, he was always quite willing to undertake anything that fell at all in his way. One of the earliest of these articles was a review of Dickens's 'American Notes,' a little book which was treated as important at that period when everything produced by Dickens was so eagerly looked for, which Warren offered to do in a most characteristic letter:—

28*th Oct.* 1842.

What say you to a review by me of Dickens's new book on America—a fair, prudent, and real review? bearing in mind my own position as a sort of *honourable yet fearless rival* of his. I have just read forty pages. I could make it a first-rate affair. If you have got no one else, drop me a line by return. If you can rely on my judgment and tact, *I can.*

In the description of the voyage out is to be found, in my opinion, a perfect specimen of Dickens's peculiar excellences and faults. There is palpable genius; subtle and vivid perceptions, exquisite felicity of illustration and feeling and natural circumstances; real humour, mannerism, exaggeration, glaring but unconscious egotism and vanity, glimpses of under-breeding.

These last I should touch on in a manly and delicate and generous spirit. Rely on Sam Warren. I will do him good, and will make himself acknowledge me a high-minded rival, a real friend.

From the glance I have given the book I think I shall on the whole be disappointed, for Dickens seems to have been equally incapable and indisposed to look beyond the surface of American manners and society.

Oh what a book I could have written!!! I mean I who have not only observed but *reflected* so much on the characters of the people of England and America.

I should pledge myself to write such a review as the public have a right to accept from *me*, and as would occasion you no embarrassment if Dickens were ever staying in your house. I shall praise him very greatly for certain qualities with discrimination, and endeavour to give some useful hints to the shoal of popular writers of the present day.

There is a curious glimpse in another of these letters of a danger to British writers which fortunately does not count for very much among the piracies by which they have been assailed, but which looked so alarming that it brought Mr Warren up in haste "from the sweet seaside" to look into it. This was the inclusion in circulating libraries of foreign editions of English works. "At Hastings I have frightened three of the principal librarians out of their wits," says Warren, "by pointing out to them the 17th section of the recent Copyright Act."

16*th Sept.* 1842.

I showed them the section which exposes them to a £10 penalty for even having in their possession a pirated edition of an English work. One had 140 copies, another 80, another 90 copies, of the most popular English works. Every copy, however, they have at once taken out of their libraries, and will never again on any terms allow a subscriber to have a copy, for

fear of informers! Their consternation was genuine, excessive, and ludicrous.

The pirate in this case was Galignani, one of whose books, an edition of Lockhart's Life of Scott, is at present on my table, with bad print and worse paper, but no doubt possessing at the time the advantage of cheapness. In Swift's time (I think) Dublin publishers played the same temporarily successful game. It is alarming to think, however, that we are all subject to a penalty of £10 for every Tauchnitz volume in our several possessions. At least that highly respectable publisher never attempted to sell his wares (very superior to those of Galignani, and in short one of the pleasantest editions to read) in this country.

Warren adds, in the same letter, a curious note on the subject of Alison's History, on which he reports there is "a savage attack" in the new number of the 'Quarterly Review':—

I most earnestly hope that Alison has profoundly considered the consequences and policy of publishing, now that he has got the ear of the European public, a deliberate damnation of the DUKE; for such indeed is the declaration that at so critical and awful a period he suffered himself to be *surprised.* It would darken his sun at its zenith: when the fortunes of the world depended upon him, to be so fearfully lost to himself as to sleep at his post would fearfully impair his military merits in the eyes of posterity. The Duke himself always has denied the fact most sternly. A friend of mine a few years ago *heard* him at his (the Duke's) own table fiercely declare that it was "nonsensically false—a French calumny," and that he might one day think it worth his while to prove it to be so. The Duke must be horridly annoyed at it, and tens of thousands of his admirers too.

Mr Warren, however, did not long go on with the articles on general subjects which he now contributed to the Magazine without coming into sharp collision now and then with the editors, those irresponsible arbiters of human affairs. "I trust it will gratify you," he says, "to hear that there is no one living whose interference with my compositions I would submit to, except yourselves."

Had those [omissions] which you have made in my last article been made by any one else—even Lockhart or Napier—I would never have written another line for them. But with old and highly valued friends like you it is another matter, and my vexation and mortification are evaporating. I never could think of you otherwise than with respect and affection as of old. I will not enter into them, but let us both forget them all. The only thing I fear is, lest it should cramp my energies in writing, to reflect that the very passages one thinks choicest will be ruthlessly struck out. Your responsibilities of course are great. I know that it was with very great reluctance that you made any alteration. I shall never cease to regret having sent it you so late again.

On other occasions, after finishing an article, "to my perfect satisfaction in all respects," his cry for forbearance is touching, and almost lyrical.

At all events, for heaven's sake, I charge you, dear B., do not sacrifice *one single tittle of what now comes to you,* which is the really original, valuable, and important part of the article, every line of which has been copied by Peel or me again and again and again, especially with reference to the parts which are now struck out of the earlier parts of the proof; and if it be in any way interfered with, consider how serious will be the chances of compromising me before the terrible ordeal of legal criticism before which it will have to pass. If pressed for room do give me an extra leaf. I will most eagerly and cheerfully sacrifice whatever sum you please, to enable you to meet the additional expense.

"I am on thorns about the alterations you say you have made," he says again; and one can but sympathise with the unlucky writer, not knowing at what cherished line or careful period, "the very passages one thinks choicest," the ruthless knife may come down. Fortunately the Blackwoods never did what other editors have been known to do, and which is a much worse infliction—viz., interpolate passages, often to the confusion of the unfortunate writer. Lockhart, I believe, did this largely, but he was a man of privileges. It continued to be the habit of the 'Edinburgh Review' down to very recent days, when an unhappy author might be made to say things quite foreign to his own opinion, even strictures upon his friends, without any power of protest. But that, I hope, has now ceased to be one of the methods of periodical literature.

Mr Warren, like most of the other contributors to 'Maga,' did his best at all times to bring new recruits to the standard. An early review of a law-book published by him pleased him so much that he introduced the writer, Mr Holme, to Blackwood, with the very interesting note, "Lockhart said to Murray as soon as he had read the article [which was published in the 'Quarterly'], 'Make all inquiry after the writer of the review of Warren's book,—he is a first-rate hand.'" Holme became and continued for some time a contributor to 'Maga,' but dropped out completely after a time, and was heard of no more. Jonathan Peel, for some time a valued supporter of 'Maga,' sometimes collaborating with Warren himself, as indicated above, and a useful writer on political and legal subjects, was one of those introduced by the author of 'Ten Thousand a-Year.' He also brought Mrs Gore, the fashionable

novelist of the day *par excellence*, who contributed several light articles, one of which Warren characterises as "delicious," and whose straightforward desire to know at once the rate of pay accorded to "known authors," on the principle that "a sparrow in the hand is better than a pheasant in the bush," is very natural and likely. The literary profession had much developed since those days when William Blackwood hesitated even to suggest the idea of payment to the persons of genius who presumably were so much superior to any such inducement. Another name lately recalled to public recollection by that last step of all out of mortal existence, which for a moment at least revives every man's title to fame, that of the late Mr Justice Grove, appears thus:—

6th October 1842.

I think I have done you a great service to-day; for after a very long conversation with Grove, who is eminent equally in physical science and literature (a very rare combination), suggested by my perusal of an exceedingly masterly lecture of his recently published on the Progress of Science, I have prevailed on him to commence forthwith a short series of papers, to be entitled by some such name as "Review of the Progress of Physical Science in the Present Century," in your 'Magazine.' It will be a most splendid affair; for at length I have completely roused him, and his capabilities are of the first order, and he is FRESH. His composition is distinguished by severe accuracy and at the same time a very remarkable power of illustration, and metaphysical speculations are his passion. Fancy all this based upon a profound acquaintance with physical science in all its branches! I never was more sanguine in my life. It is I who have sketched out to him the whole subject; he has taken it all in, and seen all its capabilities. If you had heard our conversation to-day I am sure you would have considered that I have done you a splendid service. . . .

Grove is the man who made at Paris the far-famed discovery in galvanism a few years ago.

It is delightful to see that it was not only with himself that Warren was satisfied, but with his friends also, whom he applauds and introduces without a shade of jealousy, as eager to obtain the *entrées* for them, and to recommend them to the all-powerful Editors, who kept the door of the Temple of Fame, as he would himself have said, as to secure these privileges for himself. It is curious to think of the old Judge just dropped at last like a shock of corn fully ripe into the grave, where all the group here revealed have gone long before him, as thus introduced with special commendations of his *fresh*ness, a young lawyer struggling like Warren himself into work and reputation; and reminds us, what these lifelike letters, full of all the emotions, almost succeed in making us forget, that it is more than half a century since they were written.

Exquisite in the way of those revelations of human nature which delight the cynic is the letter in which Warren indicates what ought to be said in the review about to appear in the Magazine on the publication of his succeeding work, 'Now and Then'; and yet we hope the perfectly naïve and simple vanity of a man intoxicated with his own genius, and yet so gentle-hearted and capable of accepting rebuff, would disarm any cynic with a moderate share of good-nature and sense of humour. 'Now and Then' was not published in the Magazine, but given at once to the world in a separate publication. After discussing the different reviews, all favourable, which have appeared in the newspapers, Warren continues:—

Your review will be looked forward to with deep interest and much expectation, and it must be done with first-rate ability or it will disappoint every one. How easily you can say and very gracefully that, from obvious reasons, you paused "before speaking as you thought of 'Now and Then,' written as it is by a gentleman who is universally known to have been so busy a contributor to your pages, till you should have ascertained what was the view taken of it by the public and its leading organs of opinion. Therefore no notice was taken of it in your last number. But now the public has spoken so unequivocally and almost unanimously in praise of this," &c., &c., anything you think proper.

That would be natural and graceful. You might also speak of the simple-minded earnestness and boldness with which an established writer like myself has devoted in this work all his practical energies on behalf of the cause of Christianity and of its glorious truths and doctrines, braving all ridicule, &c., &c.

On the other side are some additional suggestions for your reviewer's consideration, confidentially.

Whether I have succeeded in art I cannot say, but I wished to recall the recollection of the public to the existence of such a thing as our *pure and noble Saxon-English* undisfigured with conventionalism, Gallicism, Germanism, &c. I strove to be very rigidly plain and pure; and the critics have remarkably concurred in describing my success. The 'Times' very finely (and only justly) complimented me for always "writing on a level with the *educated ear*."

Light literature, as it is called, is deserving the profound attention of all well-wishers of their kind; for look at the prodigious number of young and unreflecting readers of it.

I think you ought to point out the probability of many imitators of this style of writing following in my wake; but pray express your anxious hope that such will not be the case, that these matters require to be handled with *consummate caution and reverence*, such as I am sure I have shown, eschewing all controversial theology as justly odious and intolerable, and [likely to] do infinite mischief.

Pray point to the French novels, Eugene Sue, &c. I have placed human nature in the same situations which those mis-

creants have done—the trial and danger—in the condemned cell: entirely to pour into it the pure light of Christianity.

My great object of all was—to imagine, as I did in my own mind, human characters, affairs, and occurrences, seen for a moment *as they are*, and also as they are permitted to appear to us (through a glass darkly). There! I have just hit off exactly my meaning; and what a grand and awful lesson does it not teach us!

I have now done.

I am inundated with congratulations, and from very high quarters too. Indeed I hear only one opinion everywhere, and from people from whom I did not expect it.

It would be pleasant to be able to lay down precise directions in this way as to what one's reviewer should say; but we fear the communication would be received at "45" with more profane laughter than serious observance.

While these lighter matters were going on, Warren was also working at a great work, a commentary on Blackstone, which, with some hesitation, as being considerably out of their way, the Blackwoods had concluded to undertake the publication of. It had been suggested that they should share it with Murray, after the old habit of their father, but the suggestion does not seem to have been a successful one. There was also some idea of a law bookseller proper being given it, but finally it was by Messrs Blackwood that the work was to be brought out. "The law booksellers are furious at the idea that a lay bookseller—and from Scotland too—should come upon their dunghill and presume to publish the greatest law-book there is," says Warren. "But pish! you have capital, experience, influence, reputation, enterprise, and discretion; I have a little reputa-

tion both in law and literature, *have never yet failed in anything, and* WILL NOT FAIL NOW." With this splendid confidence the great book went on. It was published in 1855, but the history of such a work scarcely comes within my sphere.

Other names, not much more than names in the Magazine, though so well known without its pages, come in incidentally to these busy years during the conjoint sway of Alexander and Robert Blackwood. One, a heavy regret, appears in the year 1840—the first rejected contributor whom we have encountered. I suppose it is necessary that the most clear-sighted must make a mistake here and there; and Thackeray, though introduced by the well-beloved James White as by much the ablest writer in London, had not achieved any distinct position by that time. Perhaps his treatment of humanity in general, cynical and misanthropical as it was the habit of the time to consider it, and the keenness of his arrows which flew so lightly and so true, startled and confused the judgment. He was evidently at the time, to judge from the following letter, as little acquainted with his own genius as were his correspondents.

W. M. Thackeray to Alexander Blackwood.

13 GREAT CORAM STREET, BRUNSWICK SQUARE,
29th January 1840.

Some years back you used to have pleasant papers in 'Blackwood' called "The world we live in." I should be glad to do something of a like nature if you are disposed to accept my contributions. No politics, as much fun and satire as I can muster, literary lath and criticism of a spicy nature, and general gossip. I belong to a couple of clubs in this village, and can get together plenty of rambling stuff. For instance, for next

month Courvoisieur's hanging (I'll go on purpose), strictures on C. Phillip's speech, the London Library, Tom Carlyle and the 'Times,' Bunn's new book, of which great fun may be made, and an account of Willis that may be racy enough. If the project smiles upon you, as the French say, please write me word. I can't afford to begin and send the MSS. in advance, for if you shouldn't approve the design my labour would be wasted, as the article would be written for your special readers, and no good next month.

I presume, as nothing seems to follow, that this offer—a set of Roundabout Papers, but probably not so excellent from a yet immature pen as those that came from it in its mellow fulness, years after—was not accepted. Sir Theodore Martin tells us in his Life of Professor Aytoun that the great 'Hoggarty Diamond' was also sent and declined. Who is it that has not made a blunder sometimes? This did not prevent a great friendship springing up later between Thackeray and John Blackwood, but he wooed 'Maga' no more.

Another writer very popular in his day, though now gone out like so many more, Douglas Jerrold, asked and obtained an entrance into the Magazine, where he scarcely can have found himself at home. He contributed a few of his characteristic farcical stories, and was vigorously denounced by Warren, who took the trouble to write to the Blackwoods solemnly asserting that his sole motive was of the highest kind, to implore them to put an end to contributions which were impairing the tone of the Magazine and disgusting its readers. I do not suppose this adjuration had any effect; but Jerrold's contributions did not continue very long.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE METROPOLITAN BRANCH.

DEATH OF CADELL — PLANS FOR THE FUTURE — CONSULTATIONS WITH LOCKHART — 22 PALL MALL — A GLIMPSE OF MAGINN — LADY FLORA HASTINGS — HARRISON AINSWORTH'S DINNER TO CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF THE 'TOWER OF LONDON' — DELANE OF THE 'TIMES' — A REFORM CLUB JOKE — THACKERAY — FREDERICK HARDMAN — POLITICAL ACTIVITY — MR GLADSTONE CO-OPERATES WITH THE BLACKWOODS — LETTERS FROM INDIA—GEORGE CRUIKSHANK—AN ADVENTURE TO THE COLONIES—MR GLADSTONE'S FATHER—AN ILL-STARRED GENIUS—'TEN THOUSAND A-YEAR' ON THE STAGE—MRS MAGINN.

THE year 1840 was a year full of commotion and eventfulness. The question had to be decided, what should be the next step in John's career, whose probation at Whittaker's seems now to have accomplished all that could be expected from that uncongenial drudgery. There were a great many plans taken into consideration, and much careful discussion and thought over him, whether the youth should continue his education under the charge of some other firm, or whether he should be considered to have reached that stage when he could be trusted to enter business for himself. The matter had been brought to a sudden necessity for decision by the death of Cadell, hitherto the agent of the Blackwoods in London, whose business was being wound up in the very end of 1839,

when Robert came to London accompanied by the very young cadet Archie, on his way to India, about whom also in their deputy fatherhood the cares of the elder brothers had been many. By this time the world had entered the new ways of scientific progress so far that there was now an overland mail to India, with its little railway across the desert, the harbinger of so many more wonderful things; but it was decided that it was better on the whole to send the inexperienced boy the old way in an Indiaman, rather than let him run the risks of an unknown continent. "How he will be able to manage on the journey through France I cannot make out," said Robert; and accordingly he was accompanied to Falmouth to take ship there, after the little week of gaiety and sight-seeing which had been the preface of the voyage to his predecessors. But the settlement of "Johnnie" was a more difficult matter, and necessitated visit after visit to London on the part of the elder brothers, whose letters to each other on this subject were frequent and anxious. There were many negotiations carried on. A serious debate was held over the stock of Cadell lately deceased; and much consultation as to the value of copyright and stock passed between Alexander and Robert, young John for the first time putting in an exceedingly shrewd and sensible opinion of his own, which was evidently listened to from the first with respect and attention. The absolute union of the elder brothers, and the mingled judgment and docility of the younger, already so well able to judge for himself, yet waiting with the most perfect humility and subordination upon the decision of his elders, is a most unusual

and delightful sight. John was now about twenty-two, not a very docile age; and was a high-spirited, light-hearted young man, combining what was already apparent as a keen business faculty with much inclination towards the enjoyments of life, and especially good company, which he found with the facility of pleasant youth and a cheerful temper, wherever he turned. His elders trusted him completely, received his advice, his shrewd hints as to business, his singularly matured views as to literary values, as if he had been entirely on their own footing, without even the faintest breach of youthful submission on his part or authority on theirs. Indeed the words seem too strong, though the thing was exactly so. They were all so entirely united in this very remarkable bond of family affection and mutual duty, that it was as natural to the younger to receive and to the elders to decide as if the relation had been that of father and son. None of them seems to have had the slightest idea that this was not the most natural and inevitable condition of affairs.

To give an idea of "Johnnie's" promptitude and decision, even before he had arrived at this age, I may quote from a letter undated, but apparently written while he was still at Messrs Whittaker's in Ave Maria Lane. The Cadells, still agents for the Magazine, had apparently complained of the delay in its transmission, which the youth determined to look into in his own person:—

John Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

I went down to Blackwall on Monday, as I was sure Cadell's people were talking nonsense about their [the Dock Company's]

refusal to forward the Magazine at once if paid extra for it. When I got down a little before one, I found a waggon packing with a large load, and our bales lying aside to go with the next. The loading of the waggon seemed the most interminable business. I watched it for half an hour, until I saw that unless I got another car it would not be in time to deliver that night; so I pressed them to give a separate cart for it. This they refused to do without a shilling extra per bale, so I made a bargain and gave them ten shillings. They got out a two-horse cart and had it in the Strand in an hour from the time I made the agreement.

"Whenever I saw this number of the Magazine," adds the youth, "I was sure some monster had disappointed you, for I do not think it is the thing at all." It is very evident the young man was quite ripe for business, and fit to take his place both in its external and internal concerns.

The negotiations with Cadell's representatives were long and full of difficulty. The Blackwoods had made up their minds that to establish a branch of their own business in London was in every point of view a better way than choosing another agent, a position which many other publishers in London would have been very ready to accept—Mr John W. Parker in the Strand (ultimately the publisher of 'Fraser's Magazine') having for one made proposals for it immediately upon Mr Cadell's death. But to purchase Cadell's business was a serious matter, implying grave liability and the employment of much capital. "You say you are very nervous and anxious about the matter," says Robert to his young brother in London. "I can assure you Alexander and I are no less so; indeed how could it be otherwise, not only on your account but on our own, as it involves the risk of every

shilling we have in the world. You are young enough yet to begin business." As, however, the winding up of Cadell's business could not be postponed for a year, as would have been desirable, there was nothing for it but to probe that affair to the bottom, and make up their minds whether it would be desirable or not. Their chief counsellor during the whole discussion, and indeed throughout their lives, was Mr Dickinson, the papermaker, with whom their father's relations had been very close, and who retained the strongest regard and faithful friendship for the sons. No man could be more aware of the circumstances of the trade, or what was most expedient in such a negotiation, and we gather that he was as ready to smooth practical and financial difficulties as to give the best of advice. Robert Blackwood came to town about the middle of January '40, with his young brother Archie, and plunged at once into this business. The negotiation seems to have been slightly complicated by the regard necessary to the interests of the two clerks, Buckman (he who had amused John by his explanation to the landladies that "hair" was what Mr Blackwood wanted) and Mutlow, into whose hands the business of the agency during Mr Cadell's time had been confided.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

Under all the circumstances, we ought to make a serious struggle to get possession, as, independent of the advantage to ourselves, it puts Johnnie in a fair way to do well, and it would be a grave reflection to us that when such an opportunity occurred we did not take advantage of it. I have no doubt that the money part may be arranged. Write if possible by return what you think of all this, as the only step I will take

till then, unless some unforeseen circumstance should occur, will be to find out from Buckman and Mutlow what their expectations are. I must say I thought their conduct to-day very handsome, and evidently disposed to serve us, and if we make a good bargain we can afford to be liberal.

Alexander in Edinburgh was more doubtful, and in his answer went carefully through the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme, calculating Cadell's profits very slowly, and making out that beyond the profits of the Blackwood agency, which were counted at £800 a-year, the rest was not worth considering. "The produce (deducting our agency) is only £1600," he says, "which is no return at all"—although £6000, or at the utmost £8000, was all that was asked for the copyrights, &c. But Dickinson's judgment, he adds, "is much better than ours, and if he is so satisfied of the thing, I am very much disposed to give up my opinion. As regards the necessity, both for John and us, of having an establishment of our own in London, I have always been of one opinion."

In the midst of this serious business a little interlude of semi-political gossip comes in pleasantly:—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

LONDON, 31*st January* 1840.

On Wednesday we dined at Lockhart's: there was no one there, and we had a very pleasant chat. Of Politics he talked in his old style, having just parted with Croker, who was in the best of spirits, having satisfied himself (he had been with Peel) that there was not the slightest chance of the Tories getting back to power for some time. The Queen was much distressed when she heard of the objection to Prince Albert taking precedence of the Royal Dukes: she did not care so much about the money. Lord Melbourne had been negotiating with the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge. The first gave his consent on

the promise of an increase of allowance, and the latter in an offhand way on some hint of his getting the army. The Duchess of Cambridge flared up on being told of the transaction by her husband, whom, being a clever woman, she leads by the nose, and compelled him to withdraw his consent. It comes on in the House of Lords to-night. I would give anything to hear the debate.

Last night we were at the House of Commons, and I certainly never enjoyed anything more than Stanley's speech: it was inimitable.

And here is an amusing note of a very well-known person, always zealous in literary patronage, which is very characteristic. Perhaps, however, there may be some of the younger generation who require to be told that Mr Monckton Milnes was the late Lord Houghton.

I saw a great many members in the House of Commons, and among others Mr Milnes, who asked me to breakfast this morning. On getting there a little after ten I found two other men, one of whom—a Mr MacCarthy, just returned from Germany—struck me with a MS., evidently premeditated. Milnes had invited him after seeing me last night.

"The more I see of Johnnie," he adds, in the same letter, "the more am I satisfied with his prudence, and the confidence I would place in him is unbounded. Let me know what my mother thinks of the whole matter."

During this period so eventful for him, between the seeing of sights, and the formal appearances at the India Office and before his patron to whom his cadetship was owing, young Archie found time to write to his father-brother in Edinburgh. Letters from India had suddenly brought home to the youth the reality of the great separation on the verge of which he stood.

Archibald Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

LONDON, 13*th January* 1840.

Since I have read Willie's letter it has brought back all the pain of parting with you, and I cannot help expressing my feelings. I can hardly make myself believe that I am not to see you all for so long a time, and almost think that I am going down to Edinburgh again with Bob. I cannot bear to think of the idea of parting with Bob and Johnnie, as it will be breaking the last tie that connects me with home. What Willie says about being alone in his cabin after leaving my father and you, struck me very forcibly when I thought that I also in a very short time would experience the same feelings.

"Archie is quite well," adds Robert. "He is very anxious, poor fellow, that his money should be taken to help Johnnie. I told him that this could not be done, but that it should be a great stimulus to him to be careful, as it would be as useful to Johnnie in three years, when he could be able to do what he chose with his money. It is very gratifying that he should think of such a thing." Thus the boy departs with all gentle and loving thoughts in his mind, and the other matter is resumed. The negotiation about Cadell's business came to an end, apparently because of too much grasping on one side and gathering doubts on the other; but it was scarcely concluded when another possibility appeared which demanded no risk of capital, and secured premises and a full establishment at once. It was proposed that John should join Messrs Payne & Foss, a very respectable firm, unknown now to bookselling lists, carrying his valuable agency with him, and with a prospect of soon succeeding to the control of the business, both partners being likely to retire early.

Both Johnnie and I were much pleased with the frank open way he [Foss] spoke: he admitted that he would gain by the connection, that it was fully more advantageous for them than for us—his idea being that we would bring literary people about. We would not interfere with their retail trade, nor they with our publishing. We went over the premises, which are admirably suited for the purpose. Off the front shop there is a very nice room not used at present, which John would get for his business room; and the warehouse is below the large room, the same size, and almost empty at present. I am sure you will think well of the scheme, and I only wish Payne had been here, that we might have got some idea what our share of the expense would be; but I am sure it will be moderate.

The sage Dickinson not only approved this new place, but seems to have brought the parties first together. And Alexander also approved. But when Mr Payne returned, which was not for a considerable time, difficulties sprang up, and it was finally abandoned like the others. This was not till April, when, Robert having returned to Edinburgh in February, Alexander took his place in London to settle affairs if possible. In case of a second failure, the brothers had resolved to make no more attempts of the kind, but to take independent premises and settle young John there as representative of the house; and after having finally concluded that the Payne & Foss arrangement had become impracticable, Alexander and John gave themselves up to a search for suitable premises, with many interludes of gaiety and social enjoyment. For Isabella their sister had come to London for the first time, as the guest of Mrs Warren, and her wonderful enjoyment of life and determination to see and to do everything—which continued scarcely abated to the borders of old age—kept all astir and quickened every

movement. This young lady, who began her career in London, on her way from the docks after a fatiguing voyage, by stopping her luggage-laden cab in St Paul's Churchyard to take advantage of the first opportunity of seeing that great church—then, I fear, considered more as a show than a church—naturally let no grass grow under her feet until she had seen and enjoyed everything; and her brothers, nothing loth, were led along triumphant through all her long lists of social delights: and what with dinners and parties of pleasure, and the business of looking for the new office, their time was completely filled, and there is less talk of business than ever before. But politics were running high at the time, and the co-editor of the Magazine was warmly concerned. The dates are extremely confused, indeed often non-existent, but it must have been on this occasion that Alexander wrote the following letter:—

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

I am glad to say that I was in the House last night. I had made an appointment with Stevens to meet me in the Lobby, but he did not make his appearance till 12 o'clock, so that I only heard Peel speak, and Lord John's reply; but Peel's speech was worth any trouble, and I would not have missed it for any money. It was truly exciting, and set one's blood on fire, and the cheers at times from all parts of the House were excessive. I do not know how it looks in print, as I have had no time to read it, but the effect it had upon me I shall never forget.

I did not intend writing you to-day had it not been that something should be done in Scotland, either in the way of a public meeting or an address to Sir Robert Peel, as has been got up here. This struck me so strongly that I called upon Mr Gladstone at the Colonial Office to-day, and was received very

favourably, and after congratulating him upon the appearance he had made the other night and expressing my sorrow at the result of the division, he said that "all the support of their friends was required." I then said that my object in calling was to know if he thought a strong manifestation at Edinburgh was desirable, and whether it might not do harm by stirring up the Radicals to get up a mob meeting. I asked him if he had written his father on the subject, but he was too diplomatic to say more than that he could take no part in such things, &c. The impression on my mind, however, was that, so far as his individual opinion could be gathered, he thought either a meeting or an address should be got up. What you should do is to consult the Professor and Fisher (as no time should be lost), and then go to old Gladstone, as I have no doubt his son has written him. After seeing Gladstone I went to John Murray. Lord Mahon had just been with him, and was quite delighted about the way in which the London address had been going on. The signatures altogether at this moment are from 7 to 8000. I also called upon Forbes of Culloden, and I am to go to him at the Lobby at 6, by which time he will have seen most of the Scotch members. . . . You must not show this letter to any one, for it has been written in haste.

There are several letters relating the success of a rapid meeting held in Edinburgh and the getting up of the advised address, also without date, which I took for the answer to this; but it must refer to some previous transaction of a similar kind, since the king is mentioned, throwing back the date. The rapidity with which this was done shows the warmth of political feeling, and the promptitude of action as respects political matters, which characterised the brothers. Indeed it is curious to see how much their political article in the Magazine occupied their minds with an interest transcending all the rest, as though this were really the chief

object of a periodical so largely occupied with other matters.

In the meantime the search for "the shop"—for this is the name they all give to the desired premises in London—went on anxiously, and the merits and rent of various places in Pall Mall, Jermyn Street, St James's Square, Regent Street, and various other localities in the fashionable end, are described and discussed at length. During this discussion John, the most deeply interested party, is full of excitement and almost awe at the thought of his new responsibility. "It is the thing, you know," he says, "that I like best."

John Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

May 16, 1840.

People saying I am too young acts upon me as an incentive to show them the reverse. I am fully sensible of the great confidence you and Alexander are going to put in me, and I would sooner lose my hand than not act so as to deserve it.

Alexander's communications are of a more ordinary kind, though full of affectionate care for the young brother, that every circumstance might be in his favour. Dickinson, Duncan, Lockhart—all the old counsellors were called in to advise. "Yesterday we went up to Lockhart's," writes Alexander, "and had a long talk with him. He seems to think that Jermyn Street or any of the streets thereabout will do well. I asked him if he thought George Street, Hanover Square, would do, and he said Yes."

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

29*th May* 1840.

I spoke to Lockhart about a reprint of 'Schlegel;' he does

not fancy his name being on the title-page, but says we may announce it as his in all our advertisements. He says he supposes it was his first attempt, with the exception of the Preface to the 'Stirling Heads.' You may, therefore, put the new edition to the press as soon as you like. I did not speak to him about 'Reginald Dalton,' as I think by the agreement we are bound to pay him £200, and if this be the case, a reprint would not pay.

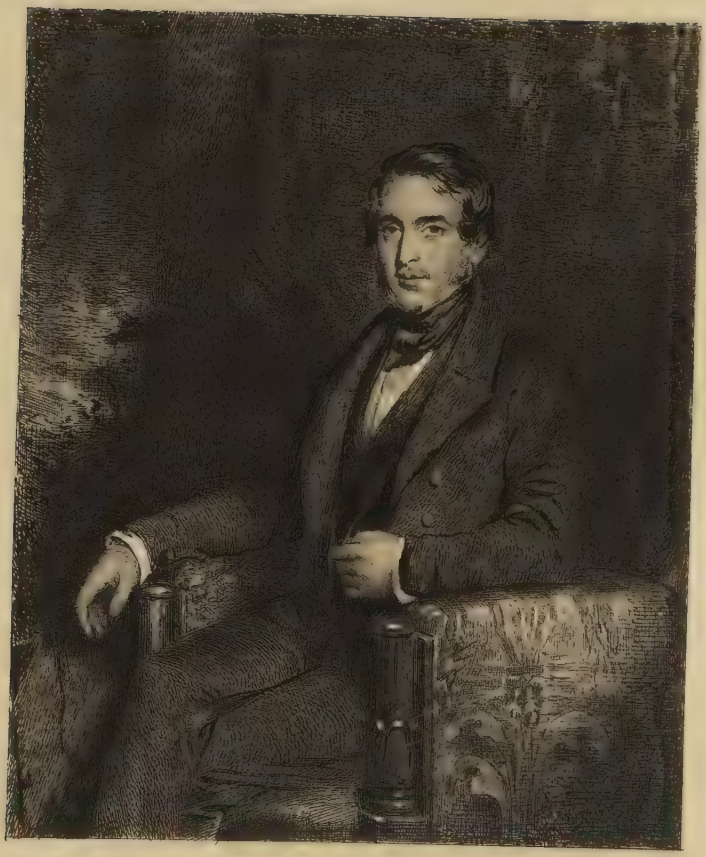
Finally, there was found a house in Pall Mall which seemed to answer all requirements, but this was not settled upon for some time. Alexander returned to Edinburgh while still Jermyn Street, &c., were being debated; and it was not till November, when Robert came to London to decide the lingering business, that the matter was settled. There are no records of any interest of this visit, but on his return to Edinburgh the current of Robert's thought ran as follows:—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

Nov. 11, 1840.

One has plenty of time to think in the Mail, and the shop 22 Pall Mall engaged most of my thoughts, more particularly the permanent arrangements we are to make. One thing came over me, and I now mention it, as it is different from what I said to you it ought to be—that the firm must be William Blackwood & Sons in London as well as here. I have had a great deal of conversation with Alexander and Jem to-day, and we are to consider the matter fully, so as to make an arrangement which will provide for all contingencies, and at the same time lead to the junction of the two concerns. Write whatever strikes you.

I have got a famous design in my head for fitting up the shop, and only wish I was a draughtsman. I have sent for Trotter's man, and hope to send you the rough design to consider. I think it will be all so plain that they will be able to begin at once.



Ever yr affn. Brother
Robt. Blackwood

The anxious care of the brothers for every detail, neglecting nothing, is conspicuous in everything. "My reason for wishing your counting-house to be enclosed is that you may be able to take people into it whenever you want to have any private talk on even ordinary business matters without being overheard by the people in the shop. . . . You must have a good collection of Scotch works, newspapers, &c., to make the place the great depôt for everything Scotch." Robert's plan for the shelving, &c., would seem to have been carried out, and all the other arrangements devised by the family. John's own interest in the proceedings of Sloman, the carpenter whom, with much prudence and comparison of work and estimates, he selected to carry out all these plans, was great, and he sent frequent bulletins on the progress of the work. Everything was to be completed in a fortnight, and the vacant place was immediately filled with the cheerful but noisy bustle of preparation.

John Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

Nov. 21, 1840.

This has been a most important day, for I received Alexander's letter communicating his and your most kind intentions towards me. I signed the lease, and engaged Langford as a clerk.

You may be sure I like the idea of being a partner very much, and, believe me, I will work well to try to deserve it. Langford seems a smart enough fellow, and must know the business well. He served his apprenticeship with Nisbet. In all he has been fifteen years in the trade.

Cadell's supernumerary porter called upon me, and told me that Buchanan had mentioned to him that I wanted a porter. He said he would have no objections to sleep on the premises whenever I wanted him to do so; and as he seems a sensible fellow, I think I will engage him.

In this modest way a new figure comes upon the scene, one which became almost as familiar in after-days to the contributors of 'Maga,' those at least who were nearer to London than to Edinburgh, as the members of the family themselves, and as afterwards the head of the establishment in town. Mr Langford, one of the most widely read and cultured of men, always genial, always modest, so well known among the literary class in London, himself an excellent critic, especially in matters dramatic, was a most unusual windfall to drop thus casually into the new concern. The Blackwoods, however, have always had the luck, which is said to be characteristic of genius in business affairs, to hit upon the right men as their assistants. Mr George Simpson had become the chief of the Edinburgh office some years before, and he too came to be as well known to the contributors as the Editors themselves; and his great business abilities and perfect, almost whimsical, devotion to the house of Blackwood, of which and all the incidents of its history he used to speak with bated breath, as if it were at least a grand ducal family and he a hereditary chamberlain, will be remembered by many. Nothing could be more unlike than these two stout supporters and assistants, but not even "the service of the antique world" could have surpassed their loyalty and faithfulness.

Thus the establishment in Pall Mall, which Alexander hoped "would yet be a celebrated place," assumed the name of the firm, to the great satisfaction of every one concerned. "You have now attained what we used to look forward to when at Nice, and I hope it will all turn out as we expected," Alexander wrote.

"Hay dines with us to-morrow, and we shall have a bumper to No. 22." A few days after he records with pleasure "our first shipment for 22 Pall Mall," which he thinks will be "a nice, genteel-looking place." So apparently did the other persons concerned. "We met Lockhart just opposite a few minutes ago," wrote John; "he is quite pleased with it, and says it cannot fail to become a sort of chapel of ease to the Carlton. He says we should have George Buchanan's head painted on the blinds and no other sign."

While the terms of the partnership were still undecided, John sent his almost daily bulletin. The property of the business was, I understand, entirely in the elder brother's hand, independent of the provision made for the others.

John Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

23 *Nov.* [1840.]

Of course I am looking forward with anxiety to hear what share you decide upon giving me, but the property is so entirely yours that I feel any share you may for the present think fit will be handsome.

I saw Lockhart yesterday. He still continues very much out of sorts. I most stupidly did not ask about the Dryden, but will see him again soon. He told me rather a good one of Maginn. A man Pettigrew published a catalogue of the Duke of Sussex' library, and about 18 mos. ago unluckily, hearing that the Doctor was a very learned man, he lent him a lot of the most valuable books for the purpose of assisting him in a review of the catalogue which he promised to do for the 'Quarterly.' Of course he has never seen anything either of the review or books, and can get the worthy's address nowhere. The books are of great value, and the poor man is in a dreadful state about it, as he is the Duke's librarian, and may possibly lose his place from inability to procure other copies. I saw

Murray to-day. He was very kind as usual. Young John mentioned that he hoped to get out Lockhart's ballads by Christmas. I said nothing.[1] I dined with Warren yesterday. He is really grieved about not having been able to do a part: you should write him a note to console him, expressing at the same time poignant regret for the want of it. There were some ladies there, and one man who, of course, had "been in the secret from the beginning."

Your views about keeping all Scotch publications precisely jump with mine. I think that Black, Whyte, and M. & S. might be induced to give us their books [adds the astute young man] on the same terms as they send them to the Row, on its being represented to them how much the sale of their books is neglected among the retail London booksellers. All these houses give the Row ten per cent under sale and the odd book. It might be well stuck into them that their books are never seen in a retail window.

I was present at the first day of Cadell's sale. It was a most extraordinary scene. Such a set of unwashed-looking savages I never saw collected. Green was almost the only decent-looking Xtian among them. Henry Bohn was sitting next me. He said he should like to have that Hooker of us. Alison continues to go off famously. I think you are calculating upon rather too large a sale for Hemans.

The "first shipment" seems to have consisted chiefly of Alison, 'Hemans,' 'The Book of the Farm,' and the quite new publication of the poems of Lady Flora Hastings. The pathetic interest which surrounded this poor lady's name as being, as people believed, "done to death by slanderous tongues," no doubt added to the probabilities of its success. It was the first book which John Blackwood "subscribed." The result of his expedition with it to the east of London, though it did not secure a large number of subscribers,

[1] The Blackwoods had not approved of this edition, which did not turn out a successful venture.

seemed to him satisfactory. "I expect to do a great deal among the West End retail booksellers," he says:—

John Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

There was not a doubt expressed by any one whose opinion was worth a farthing about its immense success. Longman only took 18, Whittaker 36, S. & M. 30. Green said that his general system was to send poetry off without taking any; but as it was my first and likely to be a very good one, he took that number. He was very strong about 25/4, which they all were, and I think a good way in future would be—not to give the 5 per cent for the first six months, but to give 25/4 at the subscription. It would increase the subscription greatly, and be more profitable to us. A good many would take more but for the principle that they never sold any poetry. One worthy remarked that the name was good but the subject bad.

We do not pretend to translate the curious mystery of the 25/4—does it mean perhaps that 25 volumes counted as 24? but these secrets are too high for us. A curious commentary upon this sad little book is to be found in the letters of Lady Sophia Hastings, the sister of the author (then dead), by whom it was placed in the publishers' hands. She laments the loss of a portion of the manuscript, which had been lent to a friend,—"not a person who could keep his observations to himself," and who, she fears, by his alterations would mar the complete authenticity of the poem in his hands.

And this [she adds] is one reason to my objecting to one of your corrections, which you must forgive me for saying candidly is one of the most beautiful expressions I have ever met with. I covet it for my sister, for she would have felt and appreciated its intense excellence. I allude to the line—

"The future and the past, the shall be and hath been."

Both my sister Adelaide and I admire it heartily; but I instantly recognised the change, and I feel it is a line which will strike every one to praise, and I am not sure that my conscience and my candour would bear me through hearing it praised.

It is perhaps a little difficult to see the excellence which struck the lady so forcibly; but to substitute an entire line is a kind of correction which strikes us as somewhat remarkable in poetry. As Dr Moir is mentioned, it is probable that he was the culprit.

Young John was now the natural collector and reporter of news for the family in Edinburgh. He could not send them anything more gratifying than the following letter:—

14*th Dec.* 1840.

I was out at dinner [he says] on Saturday. Guess where! With Mr Harrison Ainsworth to celebrate the completion of the 'Tower of London.' It was held at the Sussex Hotel, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street. About 40 gentlemen (?) present, Ainsworth in the chair, Geo. Cruikshank croupier. The lions were Serjeant Talfourd, Boz, Mrs Hughes' son, Pickersgill, Stanfield, Maclise, Roberts, Tom Longman, Jerdan, and a few more. The rest were such cattle as Leman Blanchard and gentlemen who did the literary department in newspapers, &c. There was a great deal of speech-making, and "butter me and I'll butter you" seemed to be the principle on which they all went. Talfourd, in giving Ainsworth's health, touched upon the excellence of the company assembled. In coming to the Booksellers he gave a panegyric upon them, and said they could boast the presence of a Longman and a Fraser. Ainsworth whispered to him, and he said, "But Scotland hath a thief as good; one who is the representative of one who had Scott for his friend and Wilson for his inspired aid—one who did more than any other for the advancement of literature on the other side of the Tweed." Ainsworth returned, and then went on to toast almost the whole of the company individually. About the centre he gave me, and begged to introduce me to the company as

one who, he doubted not, would shortly take a leading part in London publishing. He spoke very handsomely about our father, which was very well received. I got up, and as it was positively the first time I ever addressed any company, I was considerably abashed, but came on pretty well and was much applauded. Geo. Cruikshank was very good. He sang "Lord Bateman" and some others. The claret and champagne were as plenty (*sic*) as could be wished.

Some of the speeches were very (*sic*), and the whole idea of the thing was ludicrous in the extreme; but there was one gratification about it, the universal respect that was shown to the memory of our father.

We have sold our last set of Alison [he adds early in the year 1841]; barring the 'Farm' there is not much going. . . . I enclosed the Oriental romance from Mrs Austen yesterday, also the commencement of the 'Day Dream.' The beginning of it, I thought, looked suspiciously like twaddle, but it seemed to improve as it went on. . . . You may have seen some joke about spoons being stolen from the Reform Club [he adds]. Delane tells me that he received a letter from the steward stating that from the precautions he was convinced that it could not be done by the servants, but was the act of some of the members. I was very anxious for Delane to publish it, but he would not, from the feeling that it would lose the poor devil his situation. I do not forget to wrag the Doctor on this subject. The enclosed letter refers to a MS. about ½ a foot thick, with thousands of woodcuts. I think you will agree with me in the propriety of returning without a voyage. She is the authoress of some school-books, and not the authoress of the 'Characteristics,' &c.

The London gossip and anecdotes, many of which have unfortunately become a little obscure by passage of time, though not so important as in the days of the "Noctes," when all kind of use was made of them, for song and jest and satirical comment, were yet much enjoyed by the Edinburgh circle—to which, besides, a

joke against anything connected with the name of Reform was always dear. His account of his constant callers, the MSS. brought to him, the odd interviews with contributors and other writers, generally ending, so far as the former were concerned, with a pecuniary transaction; the bores whom he could not get rid of, and who solemnly brought him somebody's poems—generally those of a young lady—and the more delightful good fellows with whom he made agreeable acquaintances, kept his letters always lively. He had been christened by Mr White, as we have seen, on his settlement in Pall Mall, "The Metropolitan Branch," shortened into "the Branch" in ordinary parlance, with that touch of the profane which so many clergymen love—or used to love in those days; and a most animated branch he was, sending out new shoots in every direction. His long friendship with Mr Delane of the 'Times,' which continued to the end of life, was formed at this time, and also that with Thackeray, to whom he frequently refers, notwithstanding that one of his first communications with him must have been the return of a manuscript. Mr Hardman's also was one of the acquaintanceships of this period which ripened into a lifelong friendship, and the gain of a sturdy and faithful contributor for many years. If John Blackwood was not quite so eagerly on the outlook for new contributors as his father had been, he was at least always delighted to see them (when they were not bores, as even the best of contributors will occasionally be). The many friends he acquired, and the presence of Isabella in London during his first summer, led him into continual party-going and much festivity; but he seems to have had the happy knack of holding

stoutly and steadfastly to business, whatever might be the attraction of the gaieties of town.

I am unable to tell exactly to what the following letter refers. It exhibits Mr Gladstone in his early stage in full amity with the Magazine, and actively engaged in combating the pretensions of the Corn Law leaguers and the cause of Free Trade:—

PALL MALL, 27*th May* 1841.

I went to Mr Gladstone's this morning, and he changed the whole plan of the pamphlet. The original pamphlet about the Corn Laws is to be omitted, and the thing is to consist of four letters to the 'M. Post,' and a scheme about Postage and some little more matter. The 4th letter appeared in to-day's 'Morning Post.' He set me down to read it: when I came to the last paragraph I said to him, "Why, this is farther than any of our party have gone yet." He said he could assure me it was what Sir R. Peel and Sir J. Graham intended. I have no doubt of that fact, but I am dubious about the policy of our publishing it, as it will be apt to offend the Duke of Buckingham and that party. However, the publication itself will be of great use to the Establishment, and Alexr. will be here before it is actually issued. Meanwhile I have put the thing into Nichol's hands, and he promises to have it ready on Saturday night. I am to go over the proofs with Gladstone himself. I liked him much better than I expected. The thing will make better than two sheets. I gave Dickinson his first order to-day for 15 reams demy. It is much more than the thing will require, but I will be able to use it in some way, and it will be handy. We had a good deal of laughing over my extensive first order. I must open a Publication Ledger. . . .

The retailers say they never had such a dull season. It is beautiful, however, to see the way in which Alison keeps moving off. It seemed as if about 20 people said to themselves every week, "Let's have a set."

In the meantime the other part of the family in India was not without its excitements. As a matter

of special family interest, young Archie had arrived in Calcutta and made his way up country to his regiment. His boyish carelessness in respect to correspondence, and yet the favourable impression which he made everywhere, are proudly and pleasantly reported by the kind elder brother William, now at Loodhianah, and much agitated by the wars and rumours of wars of which the air was full, but as anxious to do his duty to the new-comer as were his other guardians at home.

William Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

LOODHIANAH, 13*th September* 1840.

I did not write by last mail, for, to say truth, I did not feel very easy about Archie, and thought no letter from me would be better than one in which I could not say a word about him. Fancy the little monkey never writing to me until he was established with his regiment at Bithampore, upwards of six weeks after his arrival! I had made up my mind that he had, griff-like, misdirected his letter in some way, or I should have been very uncomfortable. The first I heard of him was by a letter from Jamie Hastie to Fred, just after he had started for Bikrampore, and about a fortnight since I got his letter. He had put off from sheer laziness, he said, and was very sorry for his neglect. I like his letter very much, and think he will be sure to get on well in India. As soon as I saw by the Government orders he was appointed to do duty with the 69th, I sent him a letter for its commanding officer, Major Norton, who was once in this regiment, and is an old friend of the colonel's. He heard from Norton a few days since, who says Archie is a fine, gentlemanlike, intelligent young man, and will, he has little doubt, prove a smart officer. He said Archie's chum had also been recommended to him, and is a gentlemanly youth, which is all favourable, and I think he has made a very good start. I also heard from Grant lately, who had seen him twice, "And a very smart, intelligent, good-looking young fellow he is." Grant strongly advised him to apply himself immediately to languages,

but thought there was "too much fun in his laughing black peepers for a studious man." Archie says, however, he is determined on the subject. I wrote to him before his arrival, and twice since, and have not failed to say all I could on this and on other matters likely to be of service. He says he thinks he may be able to go through the examination in February or March, but this is quite impossible, and I fear he has formed a very inadequate idea of the work he has to go through.

The writer then turns to give his family at home an account of his own observations, hopes, and fears. The crisis is long past, and all that follows forms a part of history. But the letter of the Indian officer so deeply concerned, and in the very midst of what would be the path of war if war were determined upon, gives so good a glimpse into the interested and anxious condition of the English spectator, full of that excitement, buoyancy of spirit, yet anxiety—such as must with a serious man always temper the exaltation which the possible approach of fighting produces — that we cannot but think it will be interesting to the reader. "We are all on the tiptoe of expectation concerning Nepal—war or no war," he says.

As you will have seen from the papers, the Nepalese a short time ago seized a number of our villages, and treated with contempt the remonstrances of the British local authorities. The act was immediately disowned by the Nepal Government, and they told our Resident orders had been sent to the frontier for the restoration of the villages. This, when brought before the Governor-General, by no means satisfied him, and he sent up his ultimatum, requiring certain concessions and security from the Nepal Government against such aggressions. What the G.-G.'s conditions have been I have no idea, but I heard Mr Clerk say two days ago they were so

stringent that he thought the Goorka would scarcely stomach them. Clerk is the Government agent with the protected Sikh states, and also transacts all political matters with the Punjab. He has a very high reputation as a political officer, and is much liked, and feared too, by the natives, for he is a man they cannot humbug. He has come here, it is supposed, on some particular business at present, as one of the chief men of the Punjab Government is over here too. There is also a celebrated Nepal chief here at present, a near relation of the man who so gallantly opposed Ochterlony in the former war. He was obliged to leave Nepal betwixt two and three years ago, and was then detained here, while proceeding to the Punjab, on suspicion of being an emissary of the Nepal Court. He was afterwards allowed to go, and has been residing in the Punjab. Clerk said Government had told him to look after this man, Martabhur Sing, as he supposed Government thought he would be a good card in case of a Nepalese war. Clerk then went on to say he had had a meeting with him, and that he was a very fine soldier-like man. Martabhur said, "When I left the Nepal country the Government had sent out upwards of three hundred emissaries throughout India to endeavour to organise a general rising against the British, but it was not for any such purpose I came in: these will bear witness for me"—pulling up his loose trousers and showing his legs horribly scarred by the tortures inflicted upon him by the faction then and now in power in the Nepalese Court. "Now," he added, "let me only get my family out of the power of the Nepal Government, and then let the British Government tell me how many Goorkas they want, whether for service at Cabul or anywhere else, and see if I don't bring men who will fight for their salt. Your Hindostanee Sepoys" (he had said something about their good qualities) "have fought well and been faithful; but the Goorkas, sir, they love fighting, and are very faithful."

There are all sorts of rumours about Affghanistan. It appears they have been seizing a great deal of private correspondence in that country which reveals all kinds of plots. Some people write from Candahar and Cabul as though they expected a general rising.

The exiles had by this time begun to think of that dreadful condition of Indian life—the inevitable parting with their children that parents have to make up their minds to, and which exceeds in personal interest even such a dread expedition as that to Cabul which we can see preparing. I remember to have heard a lady say that many years after, she and her mother, both of them having long outgrown that stage of experience, and been safely settled at home —in the elder lady's case for half a lifetime—calmly talking over India and their common experience together, suddenly fell into an anguish of bitter weeping simultaneously, at the sudden thought of that dreadful moment long past but never to be forgotten. Captain Blackwood tells his brother that his wife has written on "the impossibility of parting with Willie yet." "I feel," he adds, "our mother's and all your kindness on the subject, and for my own part would almost have wished to send him at times; but yet he is only 4 years old, and if I parted with him now he could retain no recollection of me, and when we should meet again, God knows — most probably, if then, not till he was grown up." This melancholy prognostic was, happily, not fulfilled. Within two or three years two little boys—Captain Blackwood's eldest children—were sent home to be the delight of their grandmother's house and the darlings of all; but it was not long before the father and mother followed them to Edinburgh, though not, alas! till there were very sadly vacant places in that warm and hospitable house.

After the establishment of the "Metropolitan Branch" there was a very constant interchange of

letters, often almost daily, among the brothers—John's lively epistles being periodically backed up by the very business-like letters of Robert, or the serious but less calculating communications of Alexander, as the brothers came to town in turn to superintend and advise. 22 Pall Mall does not seem to have become, as Lockhart prophesied, a chapel of ease to the Carlton, and the elder brothers missed a little the flow of public business which made their Old Saloon a sort of headquarters of the Conservative party in Edinburgh. It is difficult to establish such a centre in London; and perhaps this was one of the reasons which made them all, as well as Mr John Blackwood in later days, impatient of any lengthened stay in London: but the advantages were all in his favour in his early acquaintance with Town and its ways, and youthful enjoyment of everything that went on, whether it was or was not of any particular importance—a dinner at Blackwall with the lively lawyer society full of considerable names yet only partially known, and, what was more important, potential if not actual contributors, being as delightful to him as, probably more amusing than, any assembly of big wigs. Many of the letters, however, were taken up with discussions of the illustrations necessary for the series of standard novels—reprints of Galt, Wilson, Lockhart, Hamilton, &c.—which were brought out about this time, and which gave them a great deal of trouble. The art of illustration in these days was not very interesting. It consisted generally of engravings on steel, vignettes, and frontispieces in a style now gone out of fashion; and to secure, at not too great a price, drawings from

competent artists, and competent engravers to reproduce these drawings, kept "Johnnie" in a great deal of business, paying and receiving visits, and pondering over the different qualities of engraving, an art in which he could not be expected to be very proficient. Pollok's 'Course of Time'—that curiously popular poem, which sold edition after edition both in England and Scotland, and was one of the surest of literary possessions, though it had now been many years before the public—was one of the books chosen for illustration, and committed to the hands of Mr Robert Lauder, the Scottish painter, for that purpose, who was wildly enthusiastic about it, knew half of the poem by heart, and threw his whole soul into the drawings which were to embellish it. One of the engravers employed was George Cruikshank, though probably not on this work, who sends various brief notes embellished with his remarkable signature on the subject of material and prices. "I prefer working on copper," he says, but he recommends steel as wearing better. All these details, of which the ordinary reader knows nothing, gravely occupied the publishers, to whom this was a new thing, of the value of which they were by no means warmly persuaded, but which was one of the fashions of the time to which they were compelled to yield. Lauder and the late W. L. Leitch the painter are the chief names mentioned, so that they were as far as possible faithful to their countrymen. Cruikshank, though an old friend and highly esteemed by the family, does not seem to have done much original work for them,—he illustrated an edition of the popular 'Mansie Wauch,'—though John narrates to his brother the impression made upon a

jovial dinner-party by his description of a very famous engraving which he had just executed. "He [Cruikshank] gave us a regular representation of Fagin in the condemned cell: it was the most perfect thing I ever saw. It seems he has a full-length mirror in his house, before which he had crouched and made his sketch."

But the urgent advice long ago given by Mr Henry Stephens of the 'Book of the Farm' to Mr William Blackwood, to have first-rate illustrations of animals, had been taken, and we find the name of Landseer frequently recurring. All this added a great deal to the labours of the young publisher. John narrates his interview with an eminent printseller, whom he found "about as unmannerly a savage as ever I saw, though he apparently meant to be civil enough," to ask his advice on the respective merits of various engravers; and many tribulations on this subject fell to the lot of young John, and find a place in his faithful report, in which he recounts in detail the daily vicissitudes of the books committed, until one seems to sit with him in the enclosed counting-house at the back of the shop, and feel the thrill of gratification with which he hears the order given for 25 Schlegels (even though this only counts as 24) and ten or more sets of Alison. Sometimes, however, the tale is sad. "I am much alarmed that Lady F. is stopping," he cries. "I think we shall require to give her a shower of advertisements next week." But he adds triumphantly, "Amid any little annoyances it is perfect balm in Gilead to see the two last Magazines keep moving the way they do." This, indeed, was the chief matter of all, and to keep up the literary

merit and the right selection of subject was the prevailing thought both of the brothers at home and the young one in London. It is amusing to hear of "the shower of advertisements" that was expected to revive the fading glories of Lady F., which, by the way, proved to be the case, as the next letters informs us that "the lull in Lady F." had "passed away triumphantly." In such cases "I will give it a round" is the unfailing idea, a round meaning a round of advertisement in all the country papers, which seemed to have been considered the best way of reviving popular interest.

Several of the details of these mysteries of publishing appear now from another hand, the more formal one of Mr Simpson, whose letters to young John are very like those of a steward or intendant to one of the Sons of the house — kindly respectful, almost obsequious in tone, with still a little of the patronising kindness of an elder and more experienced person, almost deeper in the secrets of the house than the youthful heir himself. "I beg to acknowledge the pleasure your esteemed letter gave me, and thank you for the interesting information it contains," Mr Simpson begins.

Mr George Simpson to John Blackwood.

EDINBURGH, *May* 1, 1841.

I am truly happy to perceive your establishment is going on so promisingly, and assure you that if it is as much so as I wish it, it will be most successful.

We have been busy this week getting up an Adventure—a shipment of goods to be consigned to the care of Mr Carfrae, who sails next week for Port Philip as a commission agent. The Messrs Blackwood have been induced to do this principally through sympathy and kindness for one for whom they feel to

a degree interested, and who has been unfortunate, and perhaps, *entre nous*, not a little out of the spirit of speculation and adventure inherent to business, and ours in particular. The goods consigned consist, as you may suppose, of things which, if they yield anything, will be found money.

The list that follows is of old editions of the novels, Wilson's, Galt's, Lockhart's, &c., the 'Course of Time,' —old veterans of the shelves, associated with works of 'Stable Economy,' surveying, and other very practical subjects, "all done up," adds Mr Simpson, "in the most attractive cloth, lettered, &c., and filling four large boxes."

The *selling price* amounts to £701. We insure them at £250. I calculate that if we get £150 we shall have made a very good thing of it. The drawback, three halfpence a pound, will pay the freight, shipping expenses, and insurance, so that we have no immediate outlay.

I am myself not very sanguine of its turning out remarkably well. I was not aware that there was any market for books in Port Philip. Both Lizars and Black, however, have given pretty large consignments. But provided poor C. and family are not sufferers, I think the best thing for us would be the loss of the cargo, and then we should be well paid by our insurance!

The difference which this half-century has made in the fortunes of the great dominion, in which this very well-informed writer much doubted whether there was any market for books, is wonderful to think of. Now the returns of a popular novelist from Australia are as well assured as from any other country (though this perhaps is not saying very much), and she is rapidly acquiring a literature of her own, full, at least in the lighter branches of art, poetry, and fiction, of spirit and originality. But in these days books for

the Colonies were provided by a special class of publishers who were not publishers, like Lamb's "Biblia a-biblia,"—mysterious firms which grew rich upon the leavings of the British markets, without any apparent foundation for their prosperity.

It is a subject of much gratulation [adds Mr Simpson] that Alison continues to go off so steadily. You shall have a list for a round of advertising early next week. 'Schlegel' has been quite a hit. By the bye, have we not been most felicitous in the choice of extracts respecting it?

Mr W. and Mr B. [adds the courteous head of the office, bringing forward the other important vassals of the house, as with a wave of his hand] desire me to acknowledge your kind mention of them, and to present their sincere wishes that you may enjoy many happy returns of the season. I am flattered and obliged by your esteemed confidence, and I assure you I shall have much pleasure in availing myself of your permission to communicate anything that I may believe useful.

Meanwhile young John went on making acquaintances everywhere and increasing his knowledge of town. The many political allusions are a little difficult to trace. The struggle between Protection and Free Trade was then convulsing the country, and it has been too important a matter in the history of the empire to be forgotten; but its many fluctuations, and all the debates and divisions which were believed to be so critical, the immediate fate of one Ministry or another hanging upon the chances of a majority at a moment when men's minds were so disturbed that it was impossible to calculate what that majority might be, have slid out of recollection, though they kept up a furious excitement from day to day among the partisans on either side. Among the political notes in these letters there rises now and then an unknown figure, showing

out of the background of eager heads with an unsuspected importance. One of these, irreverently referred to as "old Gladstone," appears frequently in the Blackwood letters as a person of influence in Scotland.

Old Gladstone [writes Alexander Blackwood, in the prospect of an immediate dissolution of Parliament] will have nothing to do with Leith, but talks very big about the necessity of everybody else spending money.

Old Gladstone [adds John] seems to have a turn for newspaper specs., as he has got a share in the 'Morning Post,' and it is through him they are pretending to be the Ministerial medium for early information, &c. Delane said he had put Lord Lyndhurst on his guard about him. He pretended not to care about it, but it strikes me they are rather alarmed at the 'Post' getting such a connection.

And here is another curious reference, which shows how the father of a great man had begun to realise his probable power :—

John Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

16*th Sept.* 1841.

I was much delighted yesterday: after sitting for some time with old Gladstone, while shaking hands with me in coming away he said, "Now, Mr Blackwood, if I can do anything for you just let me know. I have nothing exactly in my power at present, but there may be an opportunity." It was very handsome, and he may be of great use either to Jamie or Tom. I made proper acknowledgments. Will you write to me anything you think would interest him in the way of Leith news, &c., as it is good to have an excuse for calling.

Alas! the only practical manner in which "old Gladstone" reappears is when he repeatedly sends back books to Pall Mall which had been sent for by another member of his family—which is perhaps not uncharacteristic, and a good corollary to so generous

an offer of service. In the same letter in which he sends his report of this gratifying piece of (promised) kindness young John adds a touching postscript :—

I had written this letter, and did not remember until turning over to date it, that this was the anniversary of our father's death. It makes me very sad to think of it, and much ashamed and grieved I feel that I should through the whole of this day have forgotten him.

We may add a few of the interviews held by the young publisher with various old contributors and friends of the Magazine past and present. In respect to what is here said about Warren, it may be explained that 'Ten Thousand a-Year' had been dramatised for the Adelphi, where it was to appear almost simultaneously with its separate publication as a book. The adaptation for the stage had been made ready by Mr Peake, but on being referred to Warren, had so little pleased him that he set to with his usual impulsiveness to amend and improve, and ended by rewriting the principal scenes, though consenting with the manager, Yates, that Peake should have both the credit and the pay—a great piece of magnanimity. Warren indeed lights up the record one way or other whenever he appears. He produces an endless succession of emotions in the breasts of the brothers, who, at bottom, had all the warmest affection for him, and were delighted with his successes, and troubled and ashamed when, as often enough happened, his vanity led him into exhibitions of boastfulness or temper, which hurt and shocked these self-controlled and sober-minded men :—

November 1, 1841.

After breakfast I went up to Lockhart's: he has not gone

over the novels yet (*i.e.*, the reprint of his own in the series of Standard Novels), and is going out of town for a week to-day, but says they will not take him above a day or two. He says that he will do an article on Galt in about three weeks, when he will be at leisure: a famous thing I doubt not it will be. I was a very long time with him, and never saw him more cordial and amusing: he has abandoned his old practice of giving one two fingers to shake. He was lauding the Magazine as usual. After leaving him I went to Warren, and had a most interesting and amusing conversation. I could hardly believe it was the same person who had been talking so absurdly on Friday night. He had been to the Adelphi and heard Yates read the thing; and, according to his account, the whole company had been convulsed with laughter nearly the whole time. He recited some of the scenes to me, and they are perfectly inimitable. How the whole thing will act is a very different matter; but it is to be very greatly cut down. He solemnly assured me that he never altered or suggested during the whole performance; that none of the actors knew him; and that Peake was standing forward receiving the congratulations of all present. His head is full of schemes of writing, and his tone about not beginning again is gradually altering. He is certainly the most extraordinary creature. Any one who had heard the wearisome stuff he talked to me on Friday night would have been for taking out a commission of lunacy against him. He has quashed Mr Peake's scheme for printing the drama. Yates knew nothing about it, and was as indignant as myself when he heard it.

I went down to Murray's this morning [J. F. Murray, then writing a series of very successful papers entitled "The World of London" in the Magazine]. He is living in a most extraordinary place, but snug enough. He said as much as that he wanted to be out of the way. He had been a good deal vexed but not at all angry at the non-appearance of this part, but he is going to throw it aside and go on with the next, which is to be the "Strangers in London." It promises most famously. He gives conversations of the Irish fellows at their pot-houses, the Frenchmen, &c. He read me his notes for them. They are the most inimitable things I ever heard, and he says they are taken down almost verbatim from what he has himself heard.

Did he ever tell you that he had taken his degree in Edinburgh, and for three months in 1829 had been Alison's sort of clerk. He says Alison had been a most true friend to him. I never had any sort of confidential communication with him before, and whatever his appearance may be, he is the most perfect gentleman in all his feelings. He said he had had many opportunities of getting on in the world, but had thrown them all away by his own wayward, foolish, and changeable turn of mind. "I was for a different profession every fortnight," he said, "but have made money by none; and the only result is that I have collected a mass of information which I cannot turn to any useful account." He knew that his total want of taste was the great bar to his success in literature. He says he has just enough to support him without doing anything. I never before heard so curious a picture given of an ill-starred genius, for genius he is most unquestionably. He is by no means in bad spirits, and his scheme for the rest of "The World of London" is most magnificent. As soon as he is able to be out he is to come and dine with me.

Nov. 6th, 1841.

I saw Lauder yesterday. Tell Alexander that he would like to know positively if the Professor would not sit, as in that case he would not come down so late in the season. He has just finished a famous portrait of Sir John Macdonald. We were laughing at that engraving of Lockhart from Allan's picture, and he said, "I wish you would ask him to sit to me. I would make a perfect thing of it." On my saying, "I wish I could afford to give you an order for it," he said, "Never mind, I will give it to you, and in five years or so you will be richer and can give me the £30 for it—or in books just as I want them." It is very handsome of him, and I will pay him the money with great pleasure.

Nov. 15, 1841.

I was with Lockhart yesterday. He is to sit to Lauder,[1] but those confounded novels we cannot get out of his hands. He says he is engaged upon a subject at present from which he

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[1] This portrait now hangs in the Saloon at 45 George Street.

cannot venture to divert his attention. It is most provoking. The best way will be to proceed with 'Cyril Thornton,' which will be decidedly more popular. He was excessively pleasant as usual. He says he had a long letter from Harrison Ainsworth, who leaves 'Bentley's Miscellany' next month, and is going to start one on the same principles on the 1st of January, for which he has engaged Tony Johannot, the celebrated French drawer on wood. A nice mess he will make of it. The only advantage of it will be that in all probability it will cut the throat of 'Bentley's.'

I was at the Adelphi on Saturday, and the play went off with roars of laughter. They cut out mostly the whole of Gammon's part and several other objectionable things, so that as it now stands it is very good indeed. The first night Yates sat up in his room blaspheming, and when Warren saw him next morning declared, "We have missed our tip." But he is in great feather now. The walls are placarded everywhere with "'Ten Thousand a-Year,' drawn from 'Blackwood's Magazine.'" It will have a decidedly good effect, and you would, I think, be surprised to see how favourable the Sunday papers all were. Warren sent a copy of the book to Lady Lyndhurst, and got the following reply:—

"My dear Sir,—Many thanks for your excellent and amusing book. I wish to take an early opportunity of thanking you in person for it. Can you do me the favour of dining with us here on Monday?" &c.

I saw Warren this morning, and he is in the seventh heaven. He says he was received in most tremendous style by his lordship, Lady Lyndhurst, Miss Copley, and all of them. I was excessively glad to hear of the whole thing, but have a slight shock of fear that they may have been trotting him a little. Lyndhurst said an important thing—viz., "Do your friends the Blackwoods tell you if those French reprints do much mischief?" Of course Warren told him we had often talked of it; and his lordship went on: "I must have something done about it. We will, I think, be able to manage it with France, but I despair of doing anything with the Yankees." If he takes the thing up it will be brought about, and is a

devilish sight more important than these idiotical copyright bills. I was dining at the Sablonière on Saturday, and young Murray [of Albemarle Street] came in. "What a tremendous sensation 'Ten Thousand a-Year' is making!" he said; and then curiously enough began to talk about the reprint and reprints in general, and that they thought of getting up some meeting or petition. If Bob were coming up it would be a capital thing to stick ourselves forward in, as we could get at Lyndhurst through Warren or Delane.

Meanwhile 'Ten Thousand a-Year,' both in its form as a book and on the stage, was achieving extraordinary success. The Trade took it by hundreds, and it was read and commented on everywhere, reviewed not always favourably (but that was immaterial, save for the author's feelings); while the Adelphi for a time was the most triumphant of theatres. "The audience at the Adelphi," John resumes, "was the greatest possible compliment to the book."

Nov. 16, 1841.

It was crammed to the door by a totally superior class to what usually haunts the Adelphi. I saw Lord Rosslyn in a private box. Serjeant Talfourd applauded most vociferously. He was under Warren's eye, however. I was often amused by hearing the actors use his phrases, such as "sacred confidence," "honour," &c. He was the first to mention to me that there were too many *damns* in it. . . . Yates had called on me to offer a private box at the Adelphi, so I gave him a call last night. He was so busy we could not have much talk. He said [speaking of Warren], "Such simplicity of genius he never beheld; only one man in England could play Gammon; that was Warren himself. His 'sacred confidence' would take the house by storm. He would give him fifty pounds a-night if he had a theatre large enough. In the cutting down he had an awful fight."

At the end of the month we find the young pub-

lisher advising like a father and endeavouring to restrain the passion for the drama which had sprung up in Warren's mind, as it does in most of those who interfere with that siren. "Warren had seen Matthews," John explained, about some new work of a similar kind to that which beguiled the happy author every night to the Adelphi, as his friends alleged.

Their interview was only for ten minutes, and Matthews did not by any means agree to accept it—indeed so far as I could make out from Warren's own statement, rather the reverse; but said if it was a first-rate drama, &c., of course. Warren has enjoined the strictest secrecy upon him, and swears he will not tell a living soul except ourselves and his wife. I have been trying to dissuade him from the thing, and read to him what you said; but it is of no use—he requires the excitement. One thing he has the sense to determine upon, that he will not give the thing to Matthews for less than £200 and a rider upon each night's performance. His plan is to make it all hinge upon Lord Dudlington, and admirably he purposes to manage it. He was giving me a representation of Farren in that character, which was of course first-rate. There never was such a fellow.

So far as appears, the play of "Ten Thousand a-Year," notwithstanding its apparent great success, was soon withdrawn from the boards, and the author's enthusiasm for the theatre seems to have ended with it.

Perhaps this is enough of Warren for the moment; but he is always a lively element in the correspondence, and one which was never exhausted. Another visitor at the Pall Mall establishment was one whose name gives an interest to every one connected with it, and not by any means uninteresting in his own person.

I was interrupted [says John] by a call from an old Roman friend, Carlyle. He inquired most kindly after you, and was himself quite well, and at present living with a patient up in the Regent's Park. He says his brother never had the slightest intention of standing for the Edinburgh professorship—that he received a letter purporting to be a requisition agreed upon by a hundred students asking him to become a candidate—to which he replied by return of post that he was much gratified by the proposal but could not accede to their wishes, so Ferrier is safe in that quarter at any rate.

While Dr Carlyle was with me yesterday [the young man adds] it occurred to me that, now Fraser was dead, his brother would be in want of a publisher.

If you approve of it I will lead towards the subject the next time I see him. His books sell very fairly, and his 'Revolution' could never interefere with Alison.

The point of view was purely business and not literary merit. The brothers between themselves were quite impartial about Alison—that is, about his History, not his articles in the Magazine. But in the book-market his dimensions were heroic.

The next letter brings us in sight of the ever-indefatigable Maginn, after all his adventures, and they had been innumerable, coming back once more to his original supporters. He had set himself up against Blackwood: he had copied and travestied and reviled these ancient friends, but, notwithstanding all, had never broken his connection with them. It had come down to a matter of "getting five pounds from me," which a kind-hearted young publisher with the spectacle of this broken and fallen man of letters before him had not the courage to refuse; but here would seem to have been a serious effort on the part of the unfortunate writer to renew the old bonds again.

The night before last Mrs Maginn called with the commencement of two novels, which I now send you. I have read them and think they will do, especially as we are so much in want of Tales at present. I am hardly a fair judge, as the handwriting gave me great difficulty. In spite of that, however, I read them with great interest, and feel anxious to know the rest, which is a good sign. The Liverpool tale is the one he is furthest advanced with, and it is the liveliest. You will see that he has left blanks for places and dates in both. Mrs M. was looking well and in good spirits: she asked for money in advance upon them. I offered her a cheque for £10, when she said, with her Irish sort of tone, that she had her little school bill for £25 which she must pay. Like a fool I changed the cheque to that amount. We have, however, tolerable sort of security, and I did not know how to escape, for she seemed to have got orders not to leave them without some tin. I was glad to see her looking so well after all she must have come through.

By this time "the Branch" was thoroughly grafted into the new ground in London, and had fully proved his capacity to conduct the much-varied business there. We have not attempted to enter into the many dealings with the Trade,—how one firm which took at once three hundred copies of 'Ten Thousand a-Year' were favoured in their bargain; how the other booksellers revolted, and insisted on the same terms; how they were made to see logically that the smaller consumers had no right to share these advantages, which would be readily and cheerfully given along with as large an assignment to whoever chose to demand it; and how they were finally vanquished by the young publisher's firmness and reasonableness. His good sense and power of judging for himself, which he did in this transaction, are as evident as

the liveliness and good-humour with which his constant reports of everything that happened were made to the brothers in Edinburgh, who were thus abundantly and promptly rewarded for the great care and thought which they had bestowed upon his outset in life and the shaping of his career.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RANK AND FILE.

TOM OF INGOLDSBY—'THE SKETCHER'—AN UNKNOWN CONTRIBUTOR—CURIOUS LITERARY COPARTNERSHIP—A ROLLING STONE OF LITERATURE AND LIFE—SAMUEL PHILLIPS—CONTEMPORARY CRITICISMS ON DICKENS—A RIVAL TO THE 'TIMES'—'THE WORLD OF LONDON'—CHARACTERISTIC LETTER FROM LOCKHART

THE number of new contributors of any importance to the Magazine during this period was but small, yet the group which comes in to join the previous band is both interesting and amusing in various particulars. In the meantime a few recruits pass across the foreground whose reputations either do not depend at all on 'Maga,' or do so in such a moderate way that they acquire no general acquaintance with the world, though the writers may have done very good work in their day. Among the former class was the Rev. R. H. Barham, known in other regions as Tom of Ingoldsby, the author of the witty ballads dear to youth bearing that name. He had sent stray chapters on various subjects to the Magazine for many years, and was one of the correspondents of Mr William Blackwood, but he now for the first time appeared as the author of

a serial story, taking the chief place in that department of literature so far as the Magazine was concerned with a novel called 'My Cousin Nicholas,' which has not, I think, survived except among those to whom the Magazine was familiar in the forties, now a much-diminished band. The second class may be well represented by Mr Eagles, also an English clergyman, and a long and faithful contributor, the author of many graceful disquisitions both on Art and Nature, some of which were republished under the name of 'The Sketcher,' which was his distinguishing title in the Magazine. His contributions, if collected, would form volumes; but he himself has disappeared, like so many others, in the flood of production, though his special subject, Art, gave him a certain individuality among the other writers of his time. I find him in some of his letters strongly urging upon the Blackwoods the duty and advantage of setting up a Magazine of Art:—

The Arts have certainly become so important of late years, and particularly very lately [he writes in July 1842] the improvement in taste and decoration of all kinds is so striking, painting, sculpture, architecture, and the many branches of art that arise from them so meet one everywhere, and so much occupy the general mind, as shown in common conversation, that I cannot but think the Arts should have an important periodical to themselves.

Rev. John Eagles to Messrs Blackwood.

There is but the 'Art Union,' and that is very poor. I suggested a Quarterly Review of Art. The few friends to whom I have mentioned it are so struck with the belief that it would answer, that they say, "Do not mention it, or it will be taken up." There are very able men to be met with; there is certainly

now a great desire for such a work. I should like to have the editing. Turn it in your mind; for as I consider the Arts want it, if you will not undertake it I should propose it elsewhere. But first to you.

Most people, we think, are of opinion that all English appreciation of Art took its birth in this century from the Exhibition of 1851, forgetting the Gothic revival in architecture and all the consequences it brought with it. But here is a proof that the interest even in the secondary branches of decoration and embellishment was already existing long before. If a Magazine of Art was wanted, as Mr Eagles thought in 1842, we are not so entirely indebted to the great Show of '51 as it is common to believe. But the Blackwoods were not tempted by the enterprise, though there are indications, as the reader will see not long after, that Robert Blackwood had a strong inclination for fresh woods and pastures new, and would fain have pushed on into other enterprises in addition to the Magazine.

Mr Frederick Hardman is still remembered as one of the able and accomplished correspondents who, in all regions of the world, have added so much glory to the 'Times'; though perhaps less in the department of pure literature, upon which, and the methods of its manufacture, the most curious light is thrown by the letters, first of his father and then of himself, in respect to the tales, sketches, essays, and records of travel which they poured into the Magazine in a continuous and never-tiring stream. When one hears nowadays of a special correspondent plunging into an unknown world in the person of a young man fresh from the university, whose first class is supposed sufficient to con-

fer insight and experience, and to qualifiy him to disentangle the ravelled skein of foreign politics or the strategy of war, it is instructive to see how the men who filled these posts were qualified for it in earlier days. Young Frederick Hardman had been everywhere. He had travelled through the wildest wastes of America, as well as through the civilised ways of Europe, he knew all the languages and much of the literature of the Continent, before he had attained to any connection with the great paper with which his name is now associated. So had Laurence Oliphant, that rolling stone of literature and life. They did not acquire their knowledge in the very act of expressing it, but had learned to know both countries and politics by the acquaintance of years. There is, I have said, the most curious light thrown upon the workshops of periodical literature by the letters of the elder Mr Hardman, an indefatigable worker in this field. He had been for years a correspondent of Mr W. Blackwood under the odd signature of "Amicus of P.," under which absurd name, his real name never being revealed, he communicated translations from every language, tales adapted freely from Spanish, German, all the languages, sometimes from himself, sometimes from "my young friend," "my young military friend," and so forth. After an interval of twelve years from the cessation of his letters as the Amicus of P., he reintroduced and explained himself to the Blackwood brothers as follows:—

J. Hardman to Messrs Blackwood.

5th Nov. 1840.

Some ten or twelve years have now elapsed since I was a

regular contributor to 'Maga,' and in constant correspondence with your able, intelligent, and very liberal father. My contributions were drawn chiefly from German and Danish sources, and consisted of romantic and piquant tales, freely altered from the original, and adapted to British taste and feeling. I sent him also many amusing articles on Italy and the Italians, which he liked and employed in many numbers to lighten the Magazine, then a good deal occupied by long and heavy articles on Ireland. Amongst the tales were the Sphinx, the Duellists, Colonna the Painter, *cum multis aliis.* All this, however, is merely by way of introduction. My present object is to enclose a contribution for your next Magazine, should you approve it, which I have just received from a military friend long resident in Spain, and an eyewitness of many singular scenes in the last civil war. Possessing great constitutional courage, he often accompanied the well-known guerilla chief, Martin Garbano (?), during his nocturnal excursions into the Carlist districts, and rode with him forty or fifty miles during the night by way of excitement. He is a young man of intelligence and tact, and can describe what he has seen in natural and spirited language. During the war he was a volunteer contributor to a morning paper, in which all he sent was readily inserted. At my suggestion he is now in search of scarce Spanish tales and romances, which he is well qualified to "do into English"; and should you approve of the enclosed MSS., you shall have the first sight of whatever he may send me. He writes a splendid and legible hand, which will save trouble, and he will be contented with ten guineas a sheet, which in your large columns is not much for an original contribution. The enclosed narrative is essentially true, but has a little colouring thrown in occasionally to heighten the effect. Your father never knew me except under the address below, and as I am and ever was a man of retired and retiring habits, you will excuse me if I adhere to the anonymous.

The signature in this case was A. de P. But it was not long before a franker and more reasonable manner of intercourse began. Mr Hardman the elder appeared out of the mists, and his "young friend" was

finally introduced as his son. The stream of contributions became constant and copious, drawn from the literature of every country under the sun, and from the young man's own endless experience of travel and adventure. Unfortunately we are again met with the difficulty of want of date, but the letters which record the making of a certain tale of some length which appeared in the Magazine for March and April 1844 may be quoted in part as showing the operations of the literary workman in those days, when foreign literature was still somewhat difficult to get at, and the art of translation much more largely employed than at the present time:—

Mr Hardman, sen., to Alex. Blackwood.

KENSINGTON, *28th September.*

When I had first the pleasure of seeing you in London I mentioned having long had in my possession the materials of a very striking tale of Venice and the Adriatic, sketched too on a historical background of strong interest, and (to the best of my knowledge after 40 years of reading) never yet employed. When my son saw these materials, which are German and of the most rugged and difficult description, he saw at once the difficulty of investing with life, language, and colour the dull and pointless chapters of this discouraging volume; but appreciating also, as I did, their value as raw material, he proposed to me to undertake the opening of the book, which treats of painters and painting, and to head the first chapter "The Studio": the second chapter, by himself and headed "The Cavern," introduces the Istriote pirates who infested the Adriatic in the 16th century, and, secretly encouraged by Austria, mainly assisted in undermining the power of Venice. The 3rd chapter we propose to head "The Jewels"; 5th, "The Ball"; 6th, "The Battle on the Bridge," a festival in Venice of which and its confusion the pirates avail themselves to attempt the rescue of their leader, then a captive in Venice. Of this old

festival I send you an old engraving, which you can return along with the two specimen chapters. We should prefer its appearance in one number of 'Maga' rather than a division, and I think you will agree with me when you see the whole. It will be chiefly written by my son, who will, however, leave to me such passages as may be better suited to me than himself, and I shall carefully revise and frame the whole. There are two mysteries running through this singular tale which powerfully sustain the interest. . . . The other mystery is the striking resemblance of two youths, Antonio, the painter, whom you will find in the first chapter, and the young Turk, Ibrahim, who appears in the second. They turn out eventually to be twin brothers, which secret, however, is well kept to the last paragraph of the book, but their resemblance is ably employed to entangle the plot. These brothers, *the Painter and the Moslem,* give the proposed title—unless a better should occur to you, or to us after the tale is completed.

Further details of this piece of work are given in subsequent letters.

In the conception as well as the execution of this tale we have been obliged to take liberties in each chapter with one very ill-told and ill-constructed original [Mr Hardman writes]. Fully one-half indeed of what we now send you is our own, having been written without assistance from our author. The descriptions of the Proveditore Marcello and of the two beautiful women painted by Giorgione and Paris Bordone are taken from these old Venetian portraits. Of these there is not a word in the original. . . . We have opened the story with a not overlong architectural description, which, from the intimate connection of architecture with human life, is always attractive to *all* readers, far more so than minute descriptions of costumes. We have been necessarily sparing of dialogue, not only from a recollection of Mr Robert Blackwood's advice to that effect, but because a customary proportion of dialogue to so much incident would have made our first part as lengthy as a post octavo. As this romance has given us far more trouble than an original tale would have done, from the necessity of assisting and

balancing the rugged and barren original with inventions as well as execution, we shall feel obliged by your opinion of it as soon as possible.

In returning the proofs of the first part of this tale the writer adds: "You will find only the *dénouement* in my handwriting; but I have not spared my labour on the first rough copy in endeavouring to improve my son's execution of a subject so different from all he has hitherto attempted." The father had his little *amour propre* also, and did not wish to sink himself altogether; yet his son's gifts are, after all, his first theme. He continues:—

My son has made great progress in a subject after his own heart, and in his best military style, free and dashing. It is another Transatlantic adventure, and far more exciting than any former one, and is to be called "Two Nights in Southern Mexico." It is without any exaggeration the most stirring and exciting Magazine article I ever saw, and will excite more attention even than the "Scamper in the Prairie of Jacinto," of which we still hear praises in all directions. This Mexican adventure will cover about 13 or 14 pages of 'Maga,' and is sufficiently powerful to sustain 100 pages of heavy matter. Under the title of 'Transatlantic Adventures' you might publish a very pleasant and attractive volume at your own good time, including: 1st, "The Prairie and the Swamp." 2nd, "Scenes in the Tropics: the Havannah and Peru." 3, 4, 5, "Adventures in Texas." 6, "Two Nights in Southern Mexico." I throw this out as a suggestion only for your future consideration. You are the best judge of the fitting time.

The advantages of such a copartnership, when the father in his benevolent retirement from literary work could yet lend a hand to the polishing of an article, or work out a plot when necessary, or write a *dénouement*, as well as recommend, with a warmth which no one

(except Samuel Warren) could use when speaking of himself, and of his son's productions, will be readily appreciated. And the explorations of the pair into all kinds of unknown literature, out of which articles could be made, is both interesting and amusing. The elder Hardman kept his eye upon all the book-lists: he pounced upon the obscurest books, sure of finding something in them that might be handy for after-use. Here is another *trouvaille*:—

I have been dissecting the works of a Teutonic-American writer, and especially his Mexican romances, one of the earliest and published about ten years since. Now although you have heard that his name is Seedsfield or something very like it, which has an English character, I find in his Mexican work unquestionable evidence that he is either a German or one of the numerous descendants of old German settlers to be found in the agricultural districts of Pennsylvania.

The style of his Mexico is not only pure and faultless, but in the more historical portions resembles those sections of Schiller's 'Revolt of the Netherlands' which are as difficult as the Latin of Tacitus. In short, no Englishman could write such German as is to be found in portions of every work by this extraordinary writer, who is still unknown in Germany, as you may see from the enclosed pages of a German Christmas Catalogue (1844) lately sent to me, and in which are advertised second editions of several of his works, under the heading of "Schriften vom Verfasser der Legitimate und der Virey"—Writings by the Author of, &c.

I am not surprised [he writes in a subsequent letter] to see that my son's specimens of the German "Unknown" Mexican romance have made a sensation in Edinburgh, nor that doubts exist as to their being translations. But his translations are done according to the spirit rather than the letter, without, however, any unfair deviation from the latter. And such translations are no easy undertaking, requiring as much thought and more labour than many original compositions. I think that if you have room you cannot do better than en-

courage Frederick to send you a similar notice and specimens of another of the three-volume romances of our mysterious German; and one of them, a tale of Indian life and the backwoods, far exceeds any of Cooper's in material and in power. By this time, however, you must be well qualified to form a true estimate of the value of these anonymous tales. You have seen more than the foot of the statue, and need no hint from me to understand the value of such a writer for the purposes of a Magazine.

It is pretty to find that this good father, who had held back, though flattered by it, from the proposal to republish two volumes of his own past contributions to the Magazine, presses for a like advantage to his son's. "The eager demand," he says, "for new books at the libraries, and the difficulty of getting them at this reading and stay-at-home season, has recalled and strengthened my impression that you might give a very pleasant brace of volumes to the public, and benefit yourselves as well as my son, by publishing his North and South American articles in two volumes, under the title of 'Rambles and Adventures in the two Americas.'" It is altogether a charming and touching combination,—the common workshop, the father on the watch for new subjects, and his complete abnegation of his own pretensions in favour of his son, is good to see. Literary men, even for their sons, are slow to make such sacrifices.

Frederick Hardman himself appears in August 1843, free of all disguises, beginning his letter "Dear Sirs!" as Germans do, and thus betraying his long and frequent expatriations, — he had newly come from Heidelberg. He was not quite so genially submissive to his publishers as his father had been, and at once objects, though quite courteously, to

certain expressions in their letters. "Candidly speaking," he says, "I do not quite understand what you mean by not giving myself scope enough."

F. Hardman to Messrs Blackwood.

Is it that you consider I compress too much, giving less descriptive dialogue or detail than the amount of incident requires? I have always studied to make my articles as short as possible, having understood that you held brevity to be a great recommendation in the papers sent to you. I shall be very happy to send you longer articles if you wish it.

On another occasion he speaks with hesitation of the pay, which he does not think enough. His father had bargained for twelve guineas a sheet, but the young man himself found that "the London Magazines"—meaning, I presume, the 'New Monthly,' 'Bentley's Miscellany,' &c.—paid more.

Since I have been in England, and also during my last visit to this country, I have occasionally sent an article to one or other of these London Magazines, in some instances because I have been particularly solicited so to do. My best articles, however, have always been for you, nor have I ever sent anything elsewhere which I thought you would consider a material loss to your Magazine. Yet for these articles I have been in every instance *better paid* than for the best of those I sent to you. I don't know how you find it, but I can tell you that the London Magazines are often at their wits' ends, I won't say for good, but for decent articles.

My connection with your Magazine has been all along far too agreeable to me for a trifling matter to interrupt it, as far as I am concerned; and I am certain you will see nothing wrong or unjustified by circumstances in the observations I have just been making. The fact is, my dear sir, I am not a sufficiently rich man to write for less than I can get. Whatever I send you costs me a great deal of time and labour, and my receipts are by no means all profit, owing to heavy

expenses I am frequently put to for importation and purchase of books for reference and material, many of which when received prove of little or no use.

This letter contrasts amusingly with another letter from an Edinburgh contributor, Mr George Moir, received about the same time, who writes to thank the brothers for the "extreme of liberality" which had characterised some literary proposal made to him. "But I am sure," adds this gentleman, "you will not be offended if I say that I really cannot allow you to overestimate so much any services I have had it in my power to offer," and he requests that a smaller sum than that proposed should be put to his credit. "You know I have been coquetting with no other," he continues—so that the one letter is in every way a contradiction of the other. Evidently, however, the difficulty with Hardman was immediately overcome. After all, it was no more than fourteen guineas he wanted, and this with a reminder that "your manuscript-devouring, double-columned, close-lined page is to the average page of the London magazine as at least 16 to 13!"

A note that follows is rather interesting from its notice of Borrow, the as yet little known but brilliant adventurer, of whom the succeeding age has been more appreciative than his own. Our polyglot friend is sending a paper on "Spain as it is":—

I don't like to be hard on Borrow, whose books, to have been written by a missionary, contain very little methodistical cant. He appears to me rather a fine fellow, much more cut out for a soldier than a tract-vendor. If you have the book by you, refer to vol. iii. page 273, where he gives utterance to some martial and sanguinary aspirations, rather diverting as coming from an agent of the Bible Society.

Borrow as a missionary, though he certainly was an agent of the Bible Society by some strange chance, is diverting indeed.

The next subject of the indefatigable critic of foreign literature was Dumas, out of whose delightful Neapolitan books he made one or two amusing papers, and on whom he remarks in his letter with the freedom of a contemporary. "I don't wish to overdose the public, even with such an amusing dog as Dumas," he says out of the heart of a period which scarcely knew even 'Monte Christo,' and to which the 'Trois Mousquetaires' was as yet unrevealed. It was the 'Corricolo,' that most delightful of travel books, which Hardman treated—a work which, I imagine, would be as novel to the public now if it were again treated in the same way as it was then. When our writer went to Paris there are several more remarks about Dumas. Hardman's mind was full of Parisian sketches, and the best means of extracting new "copy" from all that he read and saw. "I read as many French novels as I have time to do," he says. "They are very clever many of them, but few afford convertible material."

F. Hardman to Alexander Blackwood.

Dumas has got into an odious way of writing three or four books forming a suite to each other. I understand he is at work on 'Dix Ans Après,' a continuation of 'Vingt Ans Après,' which, as you remember, continued the 'Mousquetaires.' He has written such a library that there is a shop opened solely for the sale of his books. . . .

I have been wading and skimming through oceans of French novels, and rare trash they are, the greater part of them crammed with nauseous sentiments, false feeling, and lamentably deficient in incident and point. De Balzac, who now and then used to write good things, has sunk into bookmaking.

Soulié has become dull. Scribe is one of the best; but he writes little except plays. I really think our ally Alexandre is the cleverest of them. No depths, no originality in striking out character; but so smart and dramatic, fertile of incident, and vivid in dialogue.

By the by, since the duel, the term applied to the Paris *élégants* is no longer *lion*, but *gentilhomme*, in the style of the 18th century. You will perhaps have observed in the report of the trial that the hopeful young mulatto and sucking dramatist, M. Alexandre Dumas, fils, a youth of twenty, deposed to M. Beauvallon being *très gentilhomme*. This was taken up. Arnal made an allusion to it a night or two after at the Vaudeville amidst thunders of applause, and the satirical papers, of which there are three or four, rang the changes on it for a fortnight. And *gentilhomme* is therefore the consecrated form till something newer or more piquant turns up.

It is almost cruel to quote these naïve remarks of a critic in his dressing-gown—for Hardman was laid up with severe rheumatism and wrote under disadvantages. He was at the same time translating a German novel, and writing an account of personal adventures in South America elsewhere; indeed nothing seems to come amiss, the wildest *Scamper* or the mildest review. All countries and languages were the same, one more easy and familiar than another. If fun and frolic were necessary to enliven a weighty number, he was ready to supply them; if a book had to be gravely reviewed, he was equally ready. Never was a man so furnished on all sides to make himself universally useful. And here is an instance of another kind of criticism in respect to a work which had been offered for the Magazine, on which Hardman's advice had evidently been asked :—

I return your MSS. from New York, and thereanent have sundries to say.

Its author is decidedly a very clever fellow, with a deal of fun and Yankee humour about him, and I think the book, of which he gives a synopsis, might be made a most excellent card for the Mag., independently of the benefit to be derived from the copyright plan. There are one or two things to consider. First, the substance. Up to the 39th chapter he professes to have mixed up a good deal of truth, or at least not to have launched into the extravagant. After that he changes his tack, and gets rhodomontading and inventing fabulous countries—so I understand, at least, from the passage above referred to, and the subsequent extracts. This sort of thing may be made capital if well done, but I am not sure of the wisdom of passing in the same story or book from a narrative of adventure which might be true, to a tissue of exaggerated fable which the reader must at once discern not to be so. It is difficult, however, to judge of all this by the bare skeleton submitted to us, and I should think the writer too shrewd a fellow to commit any glaring inconsistencies in the general plan of his book. . . . The Lion story must be greatly exaggerated as regards dimensions of the beast, &c. It might be made wonderfully effective, but he has not made the most of it. Secondly, as to style. Mayo is a loose sort of a writer, and often misses or injures the point by prolixity and by not knowing how to make the most of it. Read pp. 12, 13. A capital story; but the effect marred by his verbose and unvigorous way of coming to it. Tom Cringle or Scalsfield would have made a deal of such an incident, and I flatter myself it might gain considerably by passing through the hands of the translator of the latter [himself]. In short, I now think what I was not sure of when I had only read the letter, which is excellent, that the thing would be unavailable without rewriting. The materials are capital, and it would be a great pity to lose them if they can possibly be obtained, for I am pretty sure, even from the little I have seen, that I might make something deuced good out of them. If you have not read the MS. through, do so. It is very good, and I hope you will be able to get it, and that the Yankee's conceit won't take fire at the idea of a man who has written "crack articles, elaborate essays, critical reviews, love tales," and half-a-dozen other things, having his labours deemed to require revision.

That they do so is most certain, and one ought to have a certain latitude to cut and chop, abbreviate, lengthen, or condense, whensoever it may seem advisable, besides correcting his errors orthographical, logical, and so forth. But for the copyright project, it would perhaps have been no bad plan to have offered him so much for the manuscript and done what one liked with it.

The advice very likely was good; but it is whimsical to note how every piece of literary work which comes into his hands appears to Mr Hardman as material, so accustomed was he to cut and carve upon the foreign works which he translated and remoulded to suit his fancy. I find no further indication of this manuscript, which probably the "Yankee" (obsolete word!) did not care to put into Mr Hardman's mill; but the letter gives us a glimpse into the methods of the publisher's adviser which is amusing. The friendship which originated between this exceedingly energetic young literary man and the young publisher, the "Branch" in London,—arising in the partitioned corner in Pall Mall which the brothers in Edinburgh had so gravely provided for as a *sanctum sanctorum* for serious and dignified literary consultation, but which often, we fear, disturbed the decorum of Mr Langford and his satellites in the outer office by peals of laughter and the *bruyant* conversation of young men,—and which was cemented by many merry dinners and "tumblers," lasted long into the graver years when Mr John Blackwood in the course of events came to be the head of the house in Edinburgh and Mr Frederick Hardman was the all-responsible 'Times' correspondent. He no longer manipulated foreign literature when he assumed that important post, but

never ceased to be the warm friend, adviser, and brother-in-arms of this friend of youth.

The next of the new men who now appeared upon the horizon was one whose story is almost complete in the little bundle of dusty letters which lie before me, —a story full of vicissitudes, but eventually successful to a degree which few young men damaged in health and unknown in literature have ever attained. In the little sketch of Samuel Phillips in the 'National Biography' the connection is made to begin in a sensational manner, which we fear is not quite justified by truth. We learn there that the young author, very ill and very poor, reduced indeed to his last sovereign or something like it, wrote in his despair from the Isle of Wight to the firm—unknown to him — in Edinburgh, to whom he had neither introduction nor recommendation, sending the first chapters of a story, enough for a single number in the Magazine, with an appeal to their consideration; and that he received from them by return of post an acceptance of his tale and a cheque for £50, which immediately set the poor young author on his feet. I do not find any trace of the £50; nor was the beginning of the intercourse sensational in any way. Phillips' enclosure was so far encouragingly received that he wrote again, sending a second and a third instalment of his story. He was a Jew, or at least, as it is common to say of those who have become Christians, "of Jewish extraction," and very undistinguished parentage; and at this moment he was at the end of all his resources, married, and with constant severe attacks of hæmorrhage from the lungs, so that his situation was piteous and his hopes were few. The

Blackwoods, if they gave him no sensational reception, gave him hope, which was perhaps better; but not any definite engagement as yet, as will be seen from the following anxious and subdued note:—

Samuel Phillips to Messrs Blackwood.

VENTNOR, ISLE OF WIGHT, *December* 24, 1841.

According to the intention expressed in my note of the 21st inst. [not preserved] I beg to hand you the third part of the Stukely papers; and I pray you to read it before you decide upon rejecting the whole.

If you think that the interest is sustained up to the present writing, I can venture to promise you that it will not flag. I have an abundance of good matter to carry me on.

You will gather from my last note that I am most anxious to become your contributor, and I can only hope that my labours will suit your Magazine. An early answer will greatly oblige me.

The next letter, dated March 25, 1842, shows that the story, still in fragment, had been accepted for the Magazine; and perhaps the £50, or some other sum, had changed all the firmament and the circumstances of the young author. We cannot but remark on the courage and daring of these publishing days, which induced a publisher to embark cheerfully upon the publication of a novel in serial instalments long before it was completed, and without any guarantee other than a promising beginning for the capacity of the unknown writer to carry it through. So far as I can make out, the first number of 'Caleb Stukely' had been published in the Magazine when only three instalments were in hand, and the publisher's faith in the genius and trustworthiness of a young literary adventurer of whom he knew nothing thus trium-

phantly established. He writes from Mitcham—residence, prosperity, and mind all changed by this new development, eager to go on, and full of mental activity and hope :—

MITCHAM COMMON, SURREY, 25*th March* 1842.

If the earthquake does not happen, or if it does and I am spared, I hope to send you the half of the 5th part on the 1st of April, and the other half on the 15th, the first portion of Part 6 on the 1st of May, and the concluding portion on the 15th. In this way we shall run on to the close of the story, and I sincerely hope the arrangement will meet your own wishes.

I had heard that a favourable notice of my humble production had appeared in the 'Morning Post,' but I did not know that any other newspaper had noticed us. On your account more than on my own, believe me, it is that I am pleased at these satisfactory notices. Your very kind consideration and liberality have deeply impressed me, and I cannot show my sense of your goodness better than by doing all that I possibly can—it is very much less than I could wish—for the credit of your Magazine. I am grateful for the opinion you have formed of the tale up to the present period. The incidents which I have to work out in the 6th and 7th parts are of a very original character, and should tell well. I mention this to show you that our prospect is still bright.

I am happy to inform you that my health improves daily. The fine weather permits me to take gentle horse exercise—indeed my pony and Messrs Blackwood engage so much of my time and attention that I have little of either to bestow on the consideration of my own state of health—and a very good thing too, says my doctor.

This improvement in health, however, did not last long, and very shortly after the poor young author describes himself as "out of bed again" after "a desperate time," which, however, his doctor tells him, has not injured the delicate lung. But "I am sadly

reduced," he says, "as you will believe when I tell you that for a week I lay in a burning fever that would not be reduced, and that during that time I was daily giving out blood and taking in strong doses of opium and digitalis; but in other respects," he adds courageously, "I certainly feel little the worse for what has happened."

I am cheered by the glorious change that has taken place in nature during my temporary absence from life, and by your kind and encouraging letters. Rest assured that your interests shall not be forgotten. I have once more my pen in my hand, and I trust we shall go steadily on to the conclusion of 'Caleb,' to your satisfaction and my own credit. I shall (*D.V.*) write a little every day; but for the next week I cannot conceal from myself that it must be very little, if I would wisely husband strength for the future. Furthermore, I particularly desire to finish the 5th part with great care, and on these accounts I would ask you to postpone the publication of Part 5 till July. I feel that it will be better to do so, for 'Maga's' sake as well as mine. I shall in the meantime get forward, and suffer no delay that is not unavoidable to interfere with the happy prosecution and fulfilment of my task. Half of the work is already published. Part 5 is the commencement of the second half. The break of a month in a way divides them.

It had, however, to be a break of two months and not one, which in the midst of a serial story must have been trying enough for the publisher as well as for the sick man, who records four attacks of hæmorrhage between the 14th April and the 20th June:—

In spite of my frequent invitations [he says piteously] I do not neglect my duties, but every moment that I can command is spent in the performance of them. I am getting slowly, but I hope (and this is the great matter) safely, on with Part 6 of my story. I feel with you the importance of going regu-

larly to the close, and if you will extend a little consideration to me on account of my sickness, we shall manage very well. I propose to write on until the last day of the month, when I will send you all that I have been able to accomplish, and every following day the post shall carry to you a portion of the conclusion. I look forward to gathering strength and to be able to do better things after August; but I must ask your sympathy for my present condition, and entreat you to remember that I have lost much blood during the last two months, that I have taken the most depressing medicines—that I take them still—that my diet is of a lowering nature, and that the tendency of my treatment is to render me incapable of much exertion, bodily or mental. It is very painful for me to be compelled to ask you to go out of your ordinary way, but painful as it is, I have only to submit to that and deeper afflictions with patience and an implicit reliance upon the wisdom and goodness of God.

I do not know any good reason why it should be more interesting and pathetic to note a struggle like this than almost any other struggle which a sick man can carry on with the obstacles of living; but it certainly strikes upon the chords of pity with a deeper stroke, perhaps because composition is a thing that can be done or attempted at any moment of possibility, the hour or half-hour of comparative ease which comes now and then even to the greatest sufferer, while the man whose work is out of doors, whether in the fields or amid the routine of an office, is not tantalised by any such possibility. Also the sharp and poignant contrast between such affecting labours and the fact that the result of the labour is to amuse and please an often indifferent reader, to whom it is a matter of no moment what condition either of body or of mind the writer may be in, adds to the pathos of the situation—so much

for so little. Phillips, however, got through his manifold attacks with wonderful patience and courage, and did accomplish his book, though it must many times have seemed a very doubtful matter; and the publishers had no small share in the anxiety. So far as I can remember, 'Caleb Stukely' was a gloomy book and not of very great interest, which was little to be wondered at considering the manner of its production, yet managed to please the editor of 'Maga' and the readers, which was the chief point to be considered.

It is curious to be brought in sight of scraps of contemporary criticisms, casting upon reputations now firmly established the same doubtful and wavering light which now plays upon our contemporaries, reducing their chances of recognition by posterity or enhancing them, according to the critic's mood. There had been a review of Dickens and his 'American Notes' in the Magazine by the hand of Mr Warren, who considered himself the rival of Dickens, and who had for the moment almost as great a reputation, backed up vigorously, we may well believe, by the stout faction of 'Maga.' The review was "finely written," according to the opinion of Mr Phillips, who adds his own ideas on the subject:—

The close of Mr Dickens' literary career will, if I am not mistaken, be as full of useful warning as his rise was sudden and astounding. The following *morceau* is from a note of Mr Johnston's (of the 'Post'), which I received a day or two ago, and which contains sound criticism. He says: "With regard to the new work of Mr Dickens, I have only read extracts, which seem to indicate more of failure than success. He spoils what might be good by straining after effect and mounting into the falsetto of exaggerated description or inappropriate reflection.

The fitness and natural relation of things do not seem to be present to his mind, and his composition appears to imply a want of literary education."

But within an interval of a few days the writer changes his mind, and that upon a most effectual argument:—

I have this morning received a very flattering epistle from Boz on the subject of 'Caleb.' He writes me thus: "Having begun your story I cannot resist telling you at once that I think it *excellent*, and of *great* merit; and that next week I promise myself the pleasure of writing you again, and giving you my opinion more in detail." I think I must retract all that I said to you against Boz in my last letter!

Phillips had already begun to propose Tales of a kind which were popular at the period, "to begin and end in one number and independent of the rest," yet with a link of connection between them—rather, we suspect, to secure their consecutive publication than for any better reason, as 'Caleb' was by this time nearly completed, and no doubt the struggling young author looked forward with some dismay to the cessation of what was a regular monthly income. They were to be "Tales for the Times," and to take up apparently every subject under the sun. Some of them were written and published afterwards, but not, I fear, in any consecutive succession. "'Maga' used to be loved for her short and striking stories," the anxious author says; but presently a more original idea comes into his mind:—

22 Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park,
March 16, 1843.

Tell me, if you please, what you think of a series of papers under the following title: 'The Adventures of a Jew Boy in

Search of a Faith.' I have had this subject in my mind for many months, intending to write the book and to publish it at some future time as a whole. I mentioned it to Mr John Blackwood yesterday, and he seemed so much struck with the title, and to think it so very likely to please you rather than the stories about which I have already written to you, that I am desirous to obtain your opinion of the matter. My own feelings on the subject are strong, and I think a hit might be made. I should take for my hero a mild and ingenuous youth born of low parents (Jews) and seeking in the world a faith. His proceedings during the search would be the subject of the story. I believe I could manage it. No writer of the present day is so well acquainted with the Jewish character as I from circumstances happen to be. Leading him through a variety of incidents, I should at length deposit him in the bosom of the Anglican Church, which I hold to be the Church Catholic. You will understand that I do not propose to write a polemical work, although I should naturally introduce religious characters —men professing religion merely, and others acting under the influences of true piety. I should carry the Jew boy abroad, and portray him in scenes that would be new and striking to the English reader.

There are many references to this projected work in after letters, but I think it never got any further than planning and talk; for, alas! the idea had scarcely been given forth when the poor fellow was seized again by the lion that lurked in his path:—

South Cottage, Herne Bay, *May* 13, 1843.

Of all afflicted men grant that I am the most unfortunate! I returned home according to my plans on Thursday week. On Monday last I began my new series of papers, and proceeded to my satisfaction. Yesterday morning I was awakened by one of the severest attacks of hemoptysis which I have yet experienced, and I am once more on my back. This is bad enough, but what is still worse is that the suddenness of the attack and the alarm which it occasioned have had the most serious effect upon my poor wife. Would to Heaven I could send you better tidings!

As I have rallied before, I look to rallying again now; but I cannot tell you how grievously these relapses tell upon my spirits. How heartily sick of this uncertain and painful life they render me! Whilst I remain in bed I shall put the new story aside, and relieve the monotonous hours by correcting 'Caleb' for publication.

A fortnight after the sufferer wrote again, still from his bed, which curiously seems to have had no effect, nor his great weakness, upon the firm, small, legible handwriting, which continues as clear and clean as ever:—

Seven times have I suffered the return of hemoptysis within ten days [he says]. On Sunday last I coughed up some ounces of blood—inflammation on the lung supervened—the physicians were called in to consult—there was a squeak for it. I thought for an instant of you, 'Caleb,' 'Aaron,' my poor wife and boy, and gave the thing up. They bled and blistered me, and here I am, weak, thin, white, and feeble, but still in existence; and now I confidently hope the worst is over. But I have little faith. It may be that this is the last note I shall ever write you. If it be, God bless you! and think of me sometimes. I write despondingly, but not without cause. When once the blood comes gushing from the artery as it did on Sunday last, who shall say when it is to stop? I will not sicken you with the accounts again. If I get gradually better, you shall hear from me; if I do not, look into the obituary. 'Caleb' will, I think, be prepared for the press in any case. I have gone over 9 parts.

This dying man, so often brought to the very verge of the grave, outlived both the sympathetic correspondents to whom he wrote; but the struggle was a hard one, and it cannot be wondered at if sometimes for a moment he lost heart and hope. But the energy of his race and individuality was not easily crushed,

and we find him at the end of May, after so many pangs, up and at his work again:—

South Cottage, Herne Bay, *May* 30, 1843.

It was a comfort to me to find that the end of the month suggested to your friendship kind thoughts of your afflicted contributor, and induced you to send him a few lines, notwithstanding his temporary absence from the pages of 'Maga.' My last note was sad enough. In answer to your present kind inquiries, I am happy to inform you that I this day left my bed, and resumed my old seat in the quiet parlour, which opens upon a lovely country, and enables me to cheer my weary heart with images of beauty. It is nearly three weeks since I was first attacked, and after all my sufferings, you can easily believe that my sensations are those of a shattered prostrate man.

I have nearly finished the corrections of 'Caleb.' I shall send it to you, and my mind will be free of that. I shall then go on with 'Aaron Sampson,' and in the course of three weeks, if I am permitted to proceed without a recurrence of illness, I look to sending you Part I. of the tale. I have thought a good deal of it lately, and I feel that we have a chance of making a hit if I can but keep in tolerable health.

Nothing can be more curious than the appearance of this little Cockney Jew in the front of the contributors of 'Maga,' to whom a Cockney had once been the proverbial red rag to a bull; but the man must have been interesting independent of his work, hanging as he was continually between life and death, but never giving in. "The physician tells me I shall shortly be well," he says, "and that I may live for years. We shall see. For my own part the intimations of hope have ceased to cheer my heart or please my ear, but it will not do either to repine or to give way." Shortly afterwards he removed to Canterbury, but the poor fellow continued so ill that on the 22nd June he still had not been able to write

a line of 'Aaron,' though in the meantime he had caught hold of an idea which would work into a short story for the August number. "However, do not depend upon it. I may be floored to-morrow again," he writes. "If I do well, I do really believe more may be made of 'Aaron' than you were inclined to believe. Although I have written nothing, I have collected material, and once to work, we shall with moderate health get on swimmingly." From Canterbury he explains his move, by communicating "a little bit of good fortune":—

When I was at my worst in Herne Bay the general practitioner got alarmed, and wished to call in a physician. The nearest lived in Canterbury, a man in very high repute there, of the name of Edwards. This gentleman came over and received his fee of three guineas (how many pages is that?). Twice afterwards he came, and on each occasion he received his three guineas. The charge was not exorbitant; the doctor drove post-horses, and the distance from house to house is nine miles. Now, listen: at the last visit he heard from the general practitioner that I am that great and renowned man, the author of 'Caleb Stukely,' and that I don't pay the income-tax. The physician, who is one of the finest fellows living, and who has read every line of said 'Caleb,' and cried a little over a part of it, says nothing, but goes home, and in the course of a week comes posting over again. One may have rather too much of a good thing, and so I thought when I offered the usual fee; but mark you, sir, he presses my hand and refuses my gold. Twice afterwards he came, each visit costing him at the least 30s. for horses, &c., and not a farthing would he take for his trouble. When I removed here he visited me immediately, and he has been daily ever since, remaining with me an hour each time, chatting and giving me spirits, and refusing all remuneration whatsoever. I have only to add that he is a feeling, noble-minded creature, and you will acknowledge that I am a very lucky individual.

Greater luck, however, still attended the struggling writer. I do not know when it was that Robert Blackwood, who seemed always to have had a hankering after the influence and political importance of a newspaper proprietor, acquired the property of the 'Berwick Warder,' a country paper of some consequence, and which he aimed at making remarkable among the country journals of the time, and a foundation for future enterprises of a similar kind. It was also a means of adding a permanent, if small, source of income to literary persons connected with the firm, and Phillips, still very poor, weak, and struggling, had the immediate benefit of this, in an appointment to write a leader or leaders for the 'Warder.' I suppose the London correspondent, with all his wisdom and his wit, had as yet scarcely come into being in those days; for it was the leaders, the most authoritative of all kinds of literature, on which he was employed, and which furnished many jocose references among the close circle of friends, to whom this "Jew boy"—to use his own expression—immediately became "the Warder." Most of them had special names in that close band of intimates. The Doctor, the Lawyer (Warren), the London Tradesman (Phillips himself), and many others, make the references a little dim and difficult to decipher. But Phillips as Warder of the Borders was perhaps the most ludicrous of all. I find no information as to whether a copy of this paper seen in Pall Mall had caught the eye of young Delane, who was a frequent visitor there, and already a fast friend of young John Blackwood; but nothing, I imagine, could be more likely than that this was the occa-

sion of Phillips' first introduction to fame and fortune. In 1845 we find him established in a little house in Hamilton Place, St John's Wood; thanking the brothers Blackwood for their kindness "in enabling me to add to my comfort in this small but delightful snuggery;" and among his other occupations, which include "an article *versus* 'Punch' (the beasts sicken me, and I would give much to kick them effectually), and another for the Magazine," he adds, "I have done one for the 'Times,' about two columns, which I expect to see in the paper to-morrow, and of which, pray, send me your opinion. It will be followed by two or three more on the same subject." This, however, was but the beginning of good things, which the following letters narrate and explain:—

August 9, 1845.

In the big journal of last Wednesday you will find evidence of the commencement of a connection which I have every reason to believe will be permanent and profitable. I have great cause to be contented with my position, and I am. Who would have thought three or four years ago, when I wrote my first article literally for bread, and sent it to Edinburgh with an aching heart, that in the year 1845, at the age of thirty, I should be admitted to the chief seats of two such temples as 'Blackwood's Magazine' and ——? Well, thank heaven for all things, and thank you, Jack, and your brother too, from whom I have received much kindness and help, and who never have turned away a line that I have asked you[1] to publish.

Nov. 4, 1845.

I have not yet made any final arrangement with Delane. He—Delane the elder—asked me to wait until the return of his son from abroad before making any permanent engagement, and I consented to do so. The son has been in England about

[1] The death of Alexander Blackwood had occurred in the meantime.

ten days I hear, and I am expecting daily to hear from the sire. In the meanwhile I have written one or two leaders for them,—one on Trafalgar Square, did you read it? and reviewed one or two books, for the old man undertook to furnish me with work until his son's return. One of my reviews has not yet appeared. It is on the subject of Horace Walpole's 'Memoirs of the Reign of George III.'; . . . if you like the manner of treatment I will write you a review or two for the Magazine. The pay of the 'Times' has been liberal enough. They have given me £5, 5s. an article all round, and some of the articles have been of the length of half a column! not bad. But nothing at all compared to pay received in another matter a week or two ago. I wrote a prospectus for a new company, at the head of which are Hudson, Jackson of Birkenhead, Attwood, Mackenzie, and Stephenson the engineer; and I was compensated for my trouble with 10 ten-pound Bank of England notes—a hundred pounds for a week's work! not so worse! I showed the crisp creatures to Yumslacarrequi [Hardman], and wonderful to say he did not knock me down and rob me of them.

The latest news is that the "crew" are about to start a daily Radical paper; Dickens editor, Bradbury & Evans proprietors. There is plenty of money, as I am informed. This is no mere report. I was applied to a few days back to become a contributor, and terms were stated to be no object. I respectfully declined. The application to me was not direct but through a third party. The "crew" believe that they can carry the world with them, and have hopes, modest men! of crushing the 'Times.' Dickens is about to publish a new Christmas book. Pray let me have the reviewing of it in the Magazine.

In the midst of these prosperities came the check that the story upon which Philips had dwelt so fondly did not please his friends. They sent back the proof to him with remarks which brought down the writer from his high confidence. It was not for him evidently to show his race to the world in its lower developments, those levels from which himself had come.

It remained to Mr Zangwill in the present generation to record to us in all its curious details that life of the Ghetto, into which a stranger has no means of entering. Probably Phillips' young Jew was sentimental and romantic, and no such genuine model—yet it must have been with a pang that he gave up the hope of making such a picture as should enrich the world, and also of "making a hit," which was the vulgar side of the matter. "I fear," he says with sad dignity, "the alterations which I shall make in proof will be too trifling to affect your opinion. Do not insert the thing from any tenderness towards me if you think it unsuited to your pages. I shall feel in no way sore about its rejection. As to the description of the young Jew being like that of Titmouse, I am innocent of all plagiarism. I drew my picture from the life, and I am content to let it stand." He goes on about less painful matters in a letter which throws a curious side-glimpse upon the politics of the time when Free Trade was fighting its way to triumph:—

February 5, 1846.

I sent you a circular the other day which I drew up for Mr Newdigate, and circulated immensely among the London tradesmen, but so far as the cause is concerned, with little hope of success. The protectionists, to say the least, are a weak and impracticable set. Mr Newdigate,[1] a very gentlemanly person, is not a man of the world. However, I have done what I can for them, and humbly tendered my advice. Mr Newdigate seems to think that a bold stand will be made in the House on Monday or Tuesday, but I don't believe it. Whom have they? What have they done during the last week? The Leaguers have petitions in every parish—some in shops, some in the open

[1] The late Charles Newdigate, who for many years represented South Warwickshire in the Tory interest.

air. I spoke of petitions on the opposite side, but the advisability was doubted. From what I gathered from Mr Newdigate this morning, he considers himself the organ of his party; but I see no party. There wants union, perseverance, and ample funds to constitute anything like an acting body. And where are they to be found among the Protectionists?

7th Feb. 1846.

Little has happened since I wrote you. A leader was in the 'Post' yesterday commenting favourably on my circular, which is quoted entire. It was much approved by the Duke of Richmond and other noblemen in Sussex, and leave has been asked to reprint it for circulation in Brighton and other parts of the country. But the "Gentlemen" are inactive. And it is dispiriting enough to work for men who have not energy, tact, or talent, and have only character to recommend them.

"Turn to your dictionary, you cruel hypocrite, and see what *luscious* means," Phillips says, after a bantering epistle on the subject of some remarks addressed to him by John Blackwood, as to sundry phrases which were supposed to have injured the young editor's sense of delicacy. "I will bear in mind," he adds, "what you say about my nerves."

You are right. I do not take the most agreeable view possible of human nature—that is to say, the publishers' view. It is all very fine of you, Master John, with your thousands in railways and your thousands in the bank, to talk of agreeable views. If you were not to look upon life with satisfaction, you would be most ungrateful. I take the penny-a-liner's view: gloomy enough it is, I grant you, but very real. Nevertheless, I will try to fancy myself John Blackwood or a bird of paradise, and do so no more.

He had not, however, any right to the penny-a-liner's view any more than his editor. A serious embarrassment befalls him; but it is not want of money

nor want of work, but too much to do, and the difficulty of reconciling the different occupations, all bringing him money, and choosing those of them which suit him best :—

March 27, 1846.

I have written for the 'Albion' during the last month, but I am in a situation of some difficulty about it and other matters, and require a little of your help to get me out of it.

The fact is, I have now more than I can do, and before I can go on comfortably it is necessary to make a disposition of my time, which will give me health and enable me to do justice to my employers.

At the present moment my table is literally covered with books for review from Delane; two articles are in hand for 'Maga'; and the working part of three days weekly is taken up by the 'Albion' and the 'Warder.' I am unequal to the work, and must give some of it up before I am thrown on a sick-bed.

Now I need not tell you that I am desirous to keep my place in 'Maga,' and that I am not willing to desert her for any other master, as long as she thinks proper to keep me. I have done for her, for many months, as much as I could have wished. What I desire to know from you is whether or not 'Maga' will afford to keep me in regular employment. If so, I am prepared to give up either the 'Times' or the 'Albion' for her. I do not wish to inundate you: nor am I disposed after the receipt of your last letter to bind you to any agreement whatever. A certain income must be secured. I would rather have it from you and the 'Times' than from the 'Times' and the 'Albion.' What is your own feeling in the matter? I think the Magazine and the 'Warder' might realise sufficient to keep me comfortably with the 'Times': the 'Times' and the 'Albion' will certainly do so.

We do not know what answer was given to this question; but probably it was a favourable one, as we find Phillips informing his friends shortly after that "I have many things in my head," and that he is

anxious to "get to work upon a connected series of the length of 'Caleb.' But," he adds, "for the present I write for money, and to save a little."

30th May 1846.

The moment I am somewhat further ahead of the world I shall try in good earnest whether I cannot bestow a few months advantageously upon a book that shall do me credit. In the meanwhile I shall write short tales, and keep on the outlook for books that will do for reviews. Let me know if any occurs to you in my way.

I go on very comfortably with John Delane, who is worth a dozen of his father. I am supposed to select my own subjects for the paper, and to write *con amore*. Nothing can be more satisfactory than our present understanding. Mrs Gore's was mine. She made me very angry with her book, and I am glad that I have not the pleasure of her daughter's acquaintance, who, I hear, is a beautiful woman, and might have interposed between me and justice. Dickens' book is indeed trashy. I have given it a dressing in the 'Times,' which you will see.

I did not like White's play. Had any player but Macready performed the hero it would have been damned. His miserable but popular acting saved it, and would have saved a worse piece, so infatuated and mad are the public with respect to this successful impostor. . . .

I wish you were in town to join a *grand!* dinner-party which I hold on Monday next. Present, Newdigate, D. Solomon, Johnston of the 'Post,' and the two chief writers of the 'Times.'

It will be perceived that the "Jew Boy" has dropped entirely out of the question. We have no more of 'Aaron'; but the author's rise in the world from his little parlour at Herne Bay, and the patronage of his kind doctor, to grand dinner-parties, and guests such as recorded, is remarkable indeed. More and greater things were to come, and I shall wind up the account of this contributor with a letter marked

private and confidential, in which his final piece of good fortune is told:—

July 24, 1846.

You will not wonder that I have not written to you before this when I tell that for the last fortnight and more I have been engaged day after day, and almost from morning to night, on a matter of great personal as well as public importance, which came to a kind of crisis yesterday evening, only to render me busier than ever for a long time to come. About three weeks since I received an intimation from the proprietor of the 'Morning Herald' newspaper that a very great change was about to take place in the editorial and literary departments of his journal, and that he was willing to engage my services at a yearly salary for a definite period. The offer made to me was six hundred pounds per annum for three leaders a-week, and for three years certain. It was mentioned at the same time that the paper would become the organ of the Conservative party, and that negotiations were then pending between Lord Stanley and Mr Baldwin. Singularly enough the news was brought to me on the same day that I received an invitation from Newdigate to breakfast with him and Miles, the member for Bristol, for whom Newdigate wished me to procure a fellow of some talent to manage a local newspaper. At breakfast I named the proposal I had received to our friend, who urged me to accept it, and promised to write to Lord Stanley on the subject. A few days after I met Lord Wilton at Lady Ailesbury's, and communicated to him, as an influential member of the party, the nature of the proceedings as far as they had gone. His lordship, the brother-in-law of Lord Stanley, undertook to see the last-named peer immediately. He did so, and the next day I heard, to my agreeable surprise, that Lord Stanley had resolved to entertain Mr Baldwin's proposition only upon the understanding that I became the confidential agent between the party and the newspaper. Mr Baldwin and his lordship met. The stipulation was gladly acceded to by the former. I am to receive my first instructions from Lord Stanley to-morrow, and I begin to write for the 'Morning Herald' on Monday next.

The cat has fallen on his legs again, and you will say to some purpose.

I have seen a large portion of the Conservative party during the negotiations, and I think I do not greatly err when I tell you that I have joined a party which will not very long be out of power and office. From what I see I am convinced that the two Conservative sections are daily uniting, and that they must ere long carry the point against the common enemy. I have told young Delane of my engagement, and he has behaved very kindly in the matter. He thinks my position an admirable one, and very likely to lead to still better things. I have insisted, on joining the 'Herald,' upon an immediate cessation of all personal invectives against the 'Times,' and I have no doubt that John Delane will check the abuse he has been accustomed to print against the 'Herald.' Our party thought it of importance to effect so much, and perhaps I am the only person with the means of accomplishing it.

I will write you further on the subject in a few days. I shall continue, of course, to write for the 'Warder,' which will now have advantages that we will not fail to prate about in that great and influential journal. "Elinor Travers" shall be finished in time for September; and the Algiers book, with your permission, I will make over to the Chieftain, for I shall have little time for reviewing or anything else for some time to come.

Various pieces of political gossip follow, in the confident tone of the man who, from the fountainhead of affairs, could if he would send streams of refreshment all over the country. "I could tell you more than would fill my papers of humours," he says.

I thought you would be surprised and pleased [says Mr Hardman (who also had his share of nicknames—the Chieftain, Zumalacarregui, and others)] at the news of the Warder's new position, which, indeed, is a most excellent one. He was in a considerable state of excitement about it whilst pending, as you may suppose. It is a capital thing for him, I think, in all respects, though it is rather a puzzle what the Protectionists have to protect, now that corn and sugar are both gone.

It is cheerful and pleasant to be able to trace a tale of such astonishing success. It was scarcely six years since poor Phillips, in the last extremity for a living, tried his fortune with the Blackwoods, and a still shorter time since he had written from what had seemed likely to be his death-bed an almost farewell to the first and kindest of his friends. And now we leave him at the height of fortune, on the staff of two great London daily papers—and one of them 'The Thunderer' of these days. Probably these many occupations soon hindered his regular contributions to the Magazine; for here the correspondence drops, in a climax of prosperity like a fairy tale. He died, I believe, about ten years after, still comparatively a young man.

The next of the special contributors of this period was a peppery young Irishman from Dublin, then living in great poverty, yet undiminished pride, ready to take offence at an unguarded look, though very eager for help and profit. I have already quoted John Blackwood's description of this troublesome contributor, whom he found in a garret in the most unpromising of neighbourhoods, and who, though the most difficult of the brotherhood and the least subordinate, is more like the Triplet of fiction, the traditional tenant of Grub Street, than any other type of the literary man that has yet come across our way. His first introduction to 'Maga' was through a series of papers, the communications of "An Oyster-Eater," which had been received with some favour; and he had been at once added to the strength of the forces of the Magazine, on the ground of that universal adaptability and readiness to take up any sub-

ject which the editors specially cultivated. He was a Trinity College man, a good scholar presumably, and possessed the pen of a ready writer. But he was hot-tempered and impatient to a degree which made him very difficult to manage. The first of his letters which I shall quote brings us at once, which so seldom occurred with other contributors, to the verge of a quarrel. He was an earlier recruit than either of the two whom we have already dealt with, as will be seen from the date of his letter :—

J. F. Murray to Messrs Blackwood.

August 30, 1839.

I received last month an *earnest* and PRESSING letter from your house, requesting me to furnish as much matter as I could for your Magazine (to supply contemplated deficiencies in your more established correspondents), and to make an exertion in your favour for the next two months, which exertion I have made accordingly, if not to the degree of excellence required by your Magazine, at least to the best of my ability.

Although thus specially retained, I find that my last communication, solicited as it was, not *proffered*, is neither inserted nor returned, and in confident expectation of its insertion (according to the terms of your note) I made an exertion for your October number, the result of which now lies before me.

I must say *it looks like* making a convenience of a man to write him a pressing letter to do that which, when done, seems not to have required to be done at all.

I take the liberty to request that the paper entitled "The Harmonious Owls" may be restored at your earliest convenience, and am happy to find that from the excellence of the present number it is not at all essential that I should make the exertions which your last favour so pressingly demands.

To this letter Mr Robert Blackwood returned an answer half-offended, half-apologetic. "I have this

morning received your letter," he says, "the tenour of which both hurts and vexes me: from the good understanding which has hitherto reigned between us I was quite unprepared for your taking up the subject so hotly." He reminds his correspondent that every contribution of his had hitherto received prompt attention, which was by no means the case in respect to all the contributors, and that "from our pleasant personal intercourse, both my brother and myself thought we might, with greater freedom, have taken a liberty with you." This appeal touched at once the better nature of the Irishman, and he hastens to disclaim all malice, and is distressed that any explanation of a refusal to take an article that did not suit the Magazine should be thought necessary:—

> My irritation, as you justly term it, arose from another and perfectly justifiable cause, and having expressed it (being incapable of the least dissimulation) somewhat warmly, I have only to regret that it has given you any pain, and trust you will not retain any unpleasant remembrance of the matter. *Genus irritabile*,—you know the rest!

Thus the quarrel was over, and for a time "the falling out of faithful friends" seemed to be "the renewal of love," which the poet describes it. "I shall be happy at all times to have the benefit of your advice and corrections," says the chastened author. In the course of time we find him engaged on the two principal works which he contributed to 'Maga'—the "World of London," being sketches of London life, which he thought "the rage for Knight's 'London'" would make popular; and another, upon the "Environs" of London, of a historico-topographical kind. This work in particular cost him a great deal of

trouble. He is constantly explaining, criticising, and apologising. "I know the account of J. Hunter is too long," he says; "but you know we have already described the land route to Richmond, Turnham Green, Kew, Barnes, Mortlake, &c. When we have so much matter to provide you see our difficulty: besides, Hunter is a greater name than Gainsborough or Hogarth," which is a highly doubtful proposition, eminent as the great surgeon was. He adds:—

With regard to the 'Environs,' everybody says there is an opening for the work. Considering that it is in such a blackguard George-Robins style, as the style topographical must ever be, I think the thing is done better than most books of the kind. If the newspaper fellows are not a pack of liars, I think they will have to confess this without being canvassed. I shall speak to Biddlestone of the 'Post,' but I would rather have half a column of the 'Times' than the whole lock, stock, and barrel of the Press.

Everybody, however, did not, it appears, entertain the same high opinion of the 'Environs.' There is a dreadful letter from Lockhart, which the present writer looks upon ruefully, with a sympathetic sense of the confusion and dismay which it was likely to bring upon the unfortunate author. Such murderous remarks do not usually come from a hand so powerful, but this, to be sure, was private and not intended for publication. It cannot hurt the 'Environs' or their luckless author now, both the book and the man being long since dead:—

J. G. Lockhart to Robert Blackwood.

Now *do* get somebody to read over the proofs of the 'Environs.' This No. swarms with blunders and nonsense. Think of comparing Waterloo and Moscow, not to Cannæ and the siege of

Tyre or Jerusalem, of Syracuse or Carthage, but to a battle of the Saxon Heptarchy! Think of the splendid Latin translation of 'Paradise Lost' being called "an imitation of Milton by a man Dobson"! Think of Milton mentioning a line borrowed by Pope! Think of the story of Edwin and Elgiva being "a curious tradition from Mackay's 'Tributaries of the Thames'"! . . . Stephen Duck is said to have drowned himself, his head being turned by getting the living of Belfont. He lived thirty years or so after that preferment, and was a most exemplary clergyman. Mr Fox's "classical attainments are not acknowledged as remarkable." They are so by all who have read his correspondence with Gilbert Wakefield, though not by this author. Lastly, Fox is said to have taken office on the renewal of the war with France, after the peace of Amiens to wit, whereas it was not until three years later, on the death of Pitt.

Is it really right to publish such stuff as this?

There is no trace that this was conveyed to the unfortunate writer, but probably some shadow of such animadversions had got into the mind of Alexander Blackwood, and gives a tone of irritation to the letter with which he cuts short Murray's interferences with the progress of the book through the press. "As regards your remarks on our way of printing," he says, "I had already told you that it was not in the state intended for the public. It was therefore unnecessary for you to say any more about a matter which under any circumstances lay entirely in the province of the Publisher." This was sharp dealing, though the letter ends with a hope that "things will now go on pleasantly." But unfortunately they did not do so, and the end of Murray's connection with the Magazine was a long wrangle in the first place and an absolute breach in the second. The offer for republication of the 'World of London' was not accord-

ing to the author's hopes, and his immediate idea was to offer it to another publisher; but first he endeavoured to place all the advantages they were throwing away before the cruel firm which saw matters in so different a light :—

With every disposition to meet you in the most liberal way, I am nevertheless compelled to say that the rather indefinite terms mentioned in your last letter give me no encouragement. The 'World of London' represents the value of my observations and reflections for the last ten years, and of my almost undivided labour for more than one; it has been quoted and noticed in a way that no other series in your Magazine has been noticed since 'Ten Thousand a-Year.' Its success is secure, and will be great, and I repeat, with the confidence of a man who knows he is right, that none of your friends, whether literary or mercantile, would consider me unfair in asking what I know to be a very moderate price for my labour—that is to say, two hundred and fifty guineas for the copyright of the whole work, together with your own Magazine price for such further numbers as may be required to complete.

I must say that it upsets all my notions of the value of literary property to find a work wholly original and of unusual interest remunerated upon a lower scale than works in which there is much more labour of the quill than of the brains.

This is a difficulty, alas! which has troubled the literary mind since the beginning of things, why a book in every way inferior to mine should receive double or triple, nay, sometimes as much as ten times the recompense and applause which I have ever been able to secure. What a problem for the writer! But it is perennial, and begins again in generation after generation. Murray's book was by no means a great book, and the man, though freely blaming himself in private conversation as the author of all his own annoyances, was troublesome, quarrelsome, and no doubt

full of ridiculous notions as to his own literary value. The replies of Alexander Blackwood are more stern than anything we have seen in the history of the house. He characterises the other's letter as ungrateful and offensive, and denounces his absurd expectations. Among so many friendly and docile contributors here was the rebel with whom no terms could be kept. And the end of the business was complete severance, and an arrangement, which Mr Warren took much credit to himself for settling, by which the tangled matters of the copyrights were at last set to right.

This curious little group of contributors, in many ways so unlike the other supporters of 'Maga,' may be considered (though each made a separate beginning) as the fruit of the Branch—meaning at once the establishment at Pall Mall, which was an accessible centre, and the lively young man, ever ready to extend his experiences, and full of amused interest in the manners and modes of living of that curious caste of authors whom he had been accustomed from his childhood to hear discussed, not always favourably. Hardman and Phillips were both added to the circle of *habitués*, and both, I imagine, owed their future success in some degree to the meetings in that partitioned corner, about which Robert Blackwood, probably anticipating graver consultations, had been so solicitous — the young Publisher's private room, whither the great Delane came by times, the son of "The Thunderer" and himself a second Jove, holding much literary patronage in his hands. There seems no other way in which the delicate little Jew, fighting through the troubles of his beginning by the helping

hand of 'Maga,' and correcting his proofs while he lay on the verge of the grave, should have come to such prompt promotion; and the roving youth who had fought in Spain, and made a hundred excursions about the world on the borders of civilisation—which was not so common a thing in those days as now—and manufactured a hundred tales, dissertations, incidents of travel, out of foreign brains, should have reached the worthy post of 'Times' correspondent, a position for which he was evidently born. They were convivial companions both, and held many symposia under the presidency of young John, whose love of fun inspired even the delicate Phillips to occasional extravagances. Murray — the least desirable of the three, and one who did not much appear out of his own den—consoles himself for the loss of Alexander Blackwood's company one evening when he had expected him by the philosophical reflection that, "as you say, we missed two headaches next morning." Perhaps in emulation of their predecessors, whose revels at Ambrose's generally took place in imagination in their own studies, these young heroes talked more of their "tumblers" and the lively *séances* in the rooms over the Pall Mall office than was consistent with the facts, lively as these no doubt were.

CHAPTER XXI.

LONDON AND EDINBURGH.

LOCKHART SPEAKS HIS MIND ABOUT THE 'QUARTERLY'—TOUCHING INTERVIEW WITH MAGINN — WARREN REVIEWS HIS RIVAL DICKENS — AN ILLUSTRIOUS NEW CONTRIBUTOR — AMERICAN PIRATE PUBLISHERS — DEATH OF JOHN MURRAY—A FASHIONABLE NOVELIST—AMUSING STORY ABOUT SYDNEY SMITH — CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCKHART — CROKER'S METHOD OF READING A BOOK—TOM HOOD—TORY DISTRUST OF DISRAELI —DEATH OF ALEXANDER BLACKWOOD.

THE period between 1842 and 1845 was a very busy one, but without the publication of any very remarkable book, or advent of any particularly distinguished author. The visits of the elder brothers to London were frequent, and the letters of young John still more so. A stream of constant communication flowed between Pall Mall and George Street; the younger brother reporting all his movements—those of pleasure as well as those of business—and the elders replying, if not quite so largely, yet with much confidence, and with all the gossip or news of Edinburgh likely to interest him. Edinburgh was the centre of all things not less to the young man, who always felt himself more or less an exile—though a merry one—in London, than to his brothers at home. But John's youthful advices, always shrewd and clear-sighted, his business

reports, his genial management, for which, though a partner, he always seems to have felt himself responsible to his seniors, are on the whole more full of interest than the steady-going records of business in Edinburgh. Nothing could well be more living or lively than the movements of the energetic young man, who, whatever might have been the festivities overnight, was always fresh and busy at his work next morning, shirking nothing. Literature and business come in together without an interval, and there is perhaps greater relish in reporting the going off of a book than the literary consultations which took place concerning it. He begins the year cheerfully, with all the threads of his transactions in hand.

John Blackwood to his Brothers.

22 Pall Mall, *January* 5, 1842.

I think it will be a pity if you have not written to Croly to do the Pusey paper, as the devil is in it if he would not bestow pains upon a question so all-important to a Churchman. Sherwoods have had 25 'Book of the Farm' to-day, so it is in motion all round, and single copies are dropping; '£10,000 a-Year' is doing so likewise. I have got the plate of the ox from Landseer, and would have sent it to-day but could not make up a parcel. I suppose you will have them printed in Edinburgh. . . . Murray was here to-day; he will bring his next chapter to-morrow or next day. He says he thinks it will make a sheet and a half. The subject is capital—The Homeless in London. He was going to-night to the Refuge for the Destitute, where people get a night's lodging—and with an account of it he will wind up his paper. He tells me he has written to you about a guide to the Environs: it will be best to leave him to do what he thinks best, but we will be able to judge when we see a chapter of each.

January 7.

Longmans had 25 'B. of Farm' yesterday, so it is going

steadily. '£10,000 a-Year' goes on. Warren has many wonderful stories about the impossibility of getting it in a library, so I thought I would try, and found he was right. I went to a library where I was not known and asked if they had it. It was engaged many deep. They had cut it into six vols., and said they never had anything that read like it.

January 8.

'£10,000' for ever! Simpkins are out of it at last, and had 10 to-day. The sale will now go on much more briskly. S. & M. had likewise 25 'Farm'; Longmans 25 'Tom Cringle'; so this day has been fruitful. I feel in great spirits about 'Maga' this morning; all the others are certainly absolute dirt. If this new series turns out well it will be a great thing. The illustrated Pollok ['Course of Time'] would certainly be a good spec. if we could get a memoir. I think we should employ Lauder for some of the illustrations; he would, I think, like to do it. He is a good deal in that line of subject just now, as Cadell has asked him to do the Covenanters for his illustrated edition of the Novels.

Delane was with me yesterday. I thanked him for the notice of the 'Farm.' He said, "Why, I wished to have given a long notice of it, but at present much cannot be said. We will take it up again." He went on, "I am thinking of having what is rather unusual with us, but not without precedent, a long and thorough review of an old book—viz., 'Tom Cringle'—which certainly deserves it." Of course I seconded this warmly. He is going over to Paris for a week, and pressed me much to go with him. If it had been at any other season I should have gone, as he is really a Trump. . . . I went down and saw Murray to-day: he was busy upon the 'World,' but could not get it ready for to-day's post, as he had found so much fresh matter at that Night Refuge: he read me some bits from the chapter, which seemed capital. . . . He had had an application from Bentley, to whom it seems he had formerly sent a number of things, among the rest Chapter I. of the 'World of London.' The interview between them must have been good. I wish I could give you Murray's description of it. Bentley began by expressing his anxious desire to patronise literary merit wherever

he found it, on which M. made some remark as to his former treatment of himself. Bentley got over this, and went on—if he would write him anything about London. Murray said he had no occasion to find fault with us, but much the reverse. On which he exclaimed, "Oh, do not suppose for one moment that I wish to interfere with the Messrs Blackwood," at which Murray grinned, and a great lot of blarney was applied. I said to Murray that I supposed he would not send him anything. He said he would only send him what we rejected.

Pringle was in to-day and said Government were going to do something about a Scotch Poor Law, and to send a complete set of the pamphlets about it to Sir George Clerk. I have sent all Alison's, also the 4th report of the Committee. Will you send *by post* Pitmilly's pamphlet, which they want in particular.

The sketch of the London publisher here given will remind the reader too distinctly of Thackeray's Bungay. Mr Bentley, however, was, I think, hardly treated in this report. He certainly became later a very handsome old gentleman, with the blandest manners. Lauder, the Scotch painter, to whom reference is made, had lately settled in London, where I do not think he was very successful. There is a most amusing allusion to him in one of Robert Blackwood's letters of the year before. "We walked on to Lauder's, whom we found in a state of agony about a report that William Allan is coming up with an address and to be knighted. I told him that I thought nothing more likely, and that it was very proper. The more one sees of artists," adds Robert, "the more absurd do they appear." Lauder, as we learn, threw himself with enthusiasm into the illustration of Pollok, committed large passages of that sublime poem to memory, and threw all his strength into his sketches for it—notwithstanding the dreadful fact that William

Allan was knighted, though not a much greater representative of art than various other painter-knights of the same day.

The following letters bring us back to the old contributors, and to that one old contributor in particular who could never wean his heart from 'Maga':—

January 10, 1842.

I called upon Lockhart yesterday. He had been out of town for about ten days, and seems much cut up about Charles Scott's death. The conversation turned on the Copyright article (in a recent number of the 'Quarterly'), and I made some remark to the effect that it was incomplete, on which he began and spoke more openly than ever I heard him. "Murray . . . is annoying to have anything to do with. Tegg has evidently his paw upon him; indeed I should not wonder if what Church (of the Stationery Office) tells me is true, that he, Tegg, has at this present moment a share in the 'Quarterly.' I had written a great deal more, which was the cream of the whole, and had attacked Tegg. Murray shut himself up and would not see me, but stopped the press—and I had to cut it off." He uttered this with much bitterness, and evidently was desperately annoyed. He went on, "I would not have said so much to any one but you." I said that although we did not think it of much importance, we were on the authors' side of the question entirely, and would, I thought, insert in 'Maga' any arguments in its favour. After a little more talk, says he, "What would you think of a 'Noctes' with Tegg and Chambers chuckling over their profits, the doctor defending his title to perpetual copyright in his lucubrations? I could, I think, make a nice bit of their conversation." I said I should be delighted to see it, and thought you would—but after a while I said, "I do not know how the Professor might like it." He said, "That is just what I am thinking of, and it has already prevented me doing anything for the Magazine; but is it necessary to speak to him at all about the matter?" I said in reality it was not, but in a case like this it would only be common courtesy to let him

see it before printing. He said, "At all events I will do it for you before this day week. I will throw in a good deal of what I intended for the 'Quarterly.' You can, I suppose, keep the authorship perfectly secret?" On my saying, "Oh, completely," he said, "But remember it is not because I am going to write anything that I am not perfectly willing to avow." I have given you as nearly as I can what passed.

I enclose you a copy of Sir Walter's letter to Warren, which I have just received, having recovered it by writing myself to a Methodist beast to whom Warren had given it, as he says, to give to Upcott, and who wants it back. I will see Warren to-night, and if he is positive in his remembrance of giving it under pretext that it was for Upcott, we can refuse to return it, but it does not much signify.

I enclose also Murray's paper. I have not been able to read it to the end, but am a good deal disappointed. Some parts, however, are as well done as can be, and it will, I daresay, be liked.

The letter of Sir Walter to Warren (denying the authorship of 'Waverley') has already been quoted. It was indeed something of a "snub" to the young author, though much good advice was administered along with it. The following letter, it will be perceived, concerns the recent proposal of Lockhart, reported to Edinburgh a few days before:—

January 15, 1842.

I got your letter this morning, and fully agree with what you say about what Lockhart proposed doing; indeed, on after consideration it was my own feeling also. I went up to him after breakfast, and began telling him so, when I was glad to find he had given up his intention of doing it. He said he was induced to do so after reading Alison's "very good and spirited paper" on the same subject—he had not seen it when I was last with him. He said, however, when the bill was brought forward he would do us a paper on the subject. I am to send up for 'Valerius' on Monday: he has gone over it thoroughly, and says

he has cut out nearly a volume, so it will be rather thin. I spoke to Lauder about an illustration, and he said, "Leech is your very man." So he is. I will go down one of these days and see his things. He has some most exquisite sketches of the Colosseum.

This has been a glorious day in the way of sales. 28 'Ten Thousand,' 25 'Book of Farm,' 25 Novels (19 'Cringle'), 20 sets of Alison to S. & M.—hurrah!

Maginn has this moment been in, looking worse than ever I saw him. He said the Liverpool tale is fragmentary, and may be stopped almost at any point. He has however a little more done, and would finish if he were sure that we would print it. There is a great deal in what he says as to its being a succession of fragments, and I think you might try a part of it. He said he had heaps of other tales; but it was no use speaking to-day, for he would not sit down, and said not to think that he was coming bothering for money, for as for that he did not care a damn about it. If you do not use the Tragedy paper I think you should return it to him, as he might sell it to one of the London magazines. I asked his address in London: he said the 'Age' office, and seemed unwilling to give it. Altogether he was a most melancholy spectacle, and it has made me very sad to see him in such a state. He had a terrible cough, and looked death-like.

Unfortunate Maginn! he had not the easy end in real life which Mr Thackeray provided for Captain Shandon; yet in his luckless career he had many chances—more than fall to the lot of most men—and never seems to have lost the kindness which made even young John, on the high tide of life and full of so many prosperous affairs, sad at heart to see that wreck of the brilliant, genial Irishman, whom he must have remembered from his childhood, a happy visitor filling his father's house with jest and song. The young man turns with relief to more cheerful themes. His many occupations were increased by numerous inquiries and

visits here and there on the subject of illustrations to the series of reprints, Standard Novels, which the firm were now issuing, and for which Lockhart for one was revising his stories, cutting out so much as to make 'Valerius' thin. To get the engraving of these illustrations done as cheaply as possible was one of his chief cares. I do not see any trace of so much economy in respect to the drawings.

January 19.

I got up to Lockhart's, but found he had not got the copy ready yet, but engaged himself for Saturday morning. He was not saying anything particular. You will recollect I told you something of his promise to do something on Galt. He said he still intended to do it. I asked if he meant it for the 'Quarterly' or for 'Maga.' He replied, "Oh, for the 'Quarterly'; it will serve your purpose better." He made some allusion to the review of 'Tom Cringle' in the 'Times,' and said, "Do you know who wrote it?" Of course I professed absolute ignorance. He went on, "Do you know Tyers? It is through him these reviews are done." I said No, but rather let him remain in the belief that Tyers, or Tyos, was a great man at the office, whereas he is only a fag of Walter's for elections and poor-law affairs. I have no doubt he was the individual to whom Delane alluded when he said Murray had been sending his books to stipendiaries instead of to headquarters. D. told me at the time that he did not let the review of the Ballads appear until the book was out of print.

There has been no more 'Book of the Farm' going this day or two. These stupid pock-puddings of English farmers almost deserve to have their Corn Laws repealed. The review in the 'Spectator' was very good. Kettle called the other day and said he wished us to get a book done which he was sure would have an immense sale—viz., an octavo vol. giving a fair statement of the arguments on both sides of the Pusey question, with perhaps a leaning against him. He said he would have no difficulty in getting a man to do it, whose capability he would guarantee. He mentioned Jebb, a clergyman, a nephew

of the Bishop, and another man who got the theology prize at Oxford. He said wherever he goes the subject is talked of, and every one complains that they can learn nothing about it, as 94 tracts and as many replies and comments are beyond anybody's powers.

This suggestion does not seem to have been approved in Edinburgh, where there was no such stir about "the Pusey question," which, indeed, John did not himself at this period know much about, his objection to such a book being that "it would give additional notoriety to what should be kept quiet."

It is amusing to note underneath the sublimer matters of literature how curious the publishers were about each other's proceedings,—how intensely interested as to whether Murray, as some said, was printing 2000 of a new edition of a book which had not been by any means successful in its first issue; or whether Longmans could possibly pull through without loss a costly illustrated edition of Thomson which they were preparing, with illustrations scattered broadcast through the pages, which were good enough (and expensive enough) for frontispieces at the very least. It was through Mr Dickinson, who made the paper, that all the extravagant particulars of this enterprise ("which he seems to think will answer,—I would take any bet that it does not!") came to Pall Mall. "Spottiswoode has spent a mint of money in the way of presses, and he has got six pressmen with *clean hands*, clean aprons, &c., at work; he is anxious to cut out Vizetelly in that style of ornamental printing," says the young man. The extreme respect and regard with which all the brothers regarded Lockhart, and their confi-

dence in his high abilities, is amusingly apparent in our next extract:—

March 1, 1842.

For the last ten days I have been absolutely "a-busting" with Lockhart's secret, which Alexander yesterday communicated to you. I have some doubt whether he will be ready for the April No.; but come when it may, it will be famous. It will be a tremendous satire upon Club men and politicians: he says he will have a fellow shifting from side to side with the most imperturbable complacency. L.'s first idea was to keep the secret even from Alexander and you. He said there was nothing he would like better than receiving the letters with critiques, &c., upon his performance. He chuckled so much over this idea that I gave in to it for a little; but he agreed afterwards to tell you when he sent the first chapter. I had hardly got Alexander into the cab (on his arrival) when I bolted out with my news.

The Magazine has gone very well this month, and Alison makes up for every dulness in other books, 8 sets to-day. . . . Alison is surpassing itself. Hamilton's have this moment had 50 volumes sorted: you will recollect they had 12 sets only a short time back.

Alexander is looking as well as could be. Asthma seems to have fled him—for ever, I hope.

Alexander himself here comes in with his graver voice. While young John takes the cream of every experience, and is gaily tolerant of every vagary, the elder brother looks at things in general, new contributors and others, with a more serious eye:—

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

PALL MALL, *March* 3, 1842.

Murray dined with us on Tuesday, and we had a good deal of talk about the 'Environs,' which he is to send a specimen of in a few days. He is the most extraordinary being I ever encountered, and I am only glad we are not near each other, for I could not keep my temper with such a bilious cross-

grained beggar were we brought much together. There is no wonder that he has quarrelled with everybody and every Magazine he has had to do with, for he is not of the same mind five minutes together, and always fancies you must like to cheat or treat him with disrespect. The success of the 'World of London' has turned his head, and I only wish I could find out who it is that is working upon him, for there is somebody besides Bentley I am sure.

I saw Dickinson yesterday: he had not much news, but says that trade is very bad. I see no symptoms of it here, however. Old Murray I have not seen, but he is in the seventh heavens, having sold about £13,000 at his sale. I could not have believed this had I not seen Dickinson's list of the volumes bought by the principal Row houses. Young John I saw yesterday; he is working away at his Road books. I enclose you a copy of a letter he received in answer to the Memorial about the French editions of English books. We are to have an interview with Gladstone one of these days, and I hope we will get something effectual done both about them and the American ones.

Alexander no less than John was much troubled with the illustrations and the difficulty of getting drawings and engravings to please him. "I wish we could dispense with illustrations altogether," he cries in exasperation, especially with the Irishman Murray, who "would like to be author and publisher and everything himself." The 'Environs' had to be illustrated fully; there was an illustrated edition of Pollok on hand, frontispieces and vignettes for the Standard Novels, and an incalculable amount of trouble. There was also another piece of work on hand which does not seem to have been a successful one—to wit, a portrait of "the Professor," which was to be exhibited in that year in the Royal Academy Exhibition. "I have been expecting Lockhart every minute to see the Professor's portrait,

but he has not turned up. Dickinson and the few people who have seen it praise it highly," Alexander says.

Dickinson suggested that besides the large engraving we should have one done to present to the subscribers to the Magazine. We should certainly sell an immense number of the No., and it might give the Magazine a fillip at the beginning of next year. Jack has an idea of giving it the size of the painting, but this is hardly the thing.

Willie Allan and D. O. Hill were at the levée to-day, but I did not see them on their way. Lauder was here much disgusted, and he promises me a caricature of the two.

March 22nd.

I was at Lockhart's yesterday, and found him all right again and in great spirits; the new 'Quarterly' is nearly out of hand, but will not be ready this week. When Jack and I were at Lauder's on Sunday we saw specimens of the new edition of Scott. It is got up in very bad taste, and I was telling Lockhart so: he said, Oh yes, and more than all, that it was an eleemosynary appeal to the public on account of Scott's relations, by way of putting money into Cadell's own pocket. It was pleasant to hear the way he abused Cadell. I find that this worthy is not on speaking terms with any of the Row booksellers. Lockhart is delighted with the Professor's portrait. I gave it to Wagstaff yesterday, and it is to be done (engraved) in seven or eight months at furthest.

Meanwhile John's detailed record was running on. Here is another recalcitrant contributor. His contributions, so far as I am aware, were not of importance enough to be collected or to leave any special trace outside of the Magazine:—

John Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

March 7, 1842.

Simmons called when Alexander was out. I saw from what he said that he had written an idiotic and presumptuous letter,

but did not expect one so bad as it has turned out. He does not, however, mean anything offensive by his phrase about the backdoor; he only intended to express his idea that he was not a poor devil glad to fill up a vacant corner occasionally, but a regular contributor. I explained to him the utter folly of supposing that we could accept all that he or anybody else sent. The real secret of the thing is (in his case as in Murray's) that the moment any fellow is known to be successful with us they are surrounded by a clique who flatter their vanity, and then Bentley, or, with Simmons, Howe & Parsons (through Hall) offer to take anything they write. It is a great pity they do not all live in some quiet village in the country!

This day's sales are splendid. An order from Hamilton's—60 volumes Alison, 75 Pollok, 25 Hastings, 50 volumes Novels.

These sentiments of a publisher towards authors are but a small set-off to the frequently expressed sentiments of authors in respect to publishers. The idea of a quiet village in the country as a residence for the *Genus irritabile* is good, but it may be doubted whether it would conduce to the tranquillity of the country-side. The next person introduced was not, however, as we have seen, one of the rebellious of the craft:—

April 1, 1842.

S. Phillips was here to-day and sat for some time; he seems from his appearance to be a Jew, about thirty or more. He has a good deal to say, and seems a sensible fellow. He does not look in such bad health, but was wrapped up in every possible way. He cannot be in much poverty, as he represented himself, for he has a wife and keeps a pony phaeton. He said he had received a letter from Johnston of the 'Morning Post,' whom he was not acquainted with, filled with praise of his papers, and saying that though not in his department he would take an opportunity of reviewing them.

April 16.

I enclose the rough proof of first sheet of the 'Environs.' I have just been reading it, and it is capital: it is a pity the

author should be such a cantankerous brute. Warren was in to-day in great feather and read his winding-up to me, which certainly could hardly be surpassed. It is graphic beyond anything I ever read. He has evidently been capering about Westminster reading it to everybody, and, according to his account, the judges and every one are dying to see the next number of 'Maga.'

A momentary misunderstanding with Mr Warren here brings a letter of his into the correspondence of the brothers. It was, as usual, on the subject of an article, a review of Dickens, to which the anxious editors in Edinburgh were disposed to put his name, notwithstanding their strong prejudice against the revelation of individual names. Young John had done all he could to persuade the alarmed author that this was a hasty thought, and would not be carried out; but, with the philosophy of youth, concludes that it will do no harm, "showing him that you will not give up your judgment about a paper to the Professor any more than to him." Dickens had been lately in Edinburgh, where he had been received at a public dinner, and much fêted, and probably the Professor objected altogether to the attack about to be made upon him. "As for the article itself, it is admirable," says John, —"nothing could be better. Dickens will never be so injudicious as to reply. Nothing would give Warren greater pleasure than to be fairly let loose upon him as Q. Q. Q."

You may be sure [he adds] I was charmed to hear of the Professor's doings. What a number we shall have!—Wilson, Bulwer, Warren, Landor, and De Quincey! What periodical, quarterly or monthly, can beat that?

"The sight of the proof of my review with Q. Q. Q.

on it relieved me from all my *horrid* apprehensions," cries Warren.

Samuel Warren to Alexander Blackwood.

You know the ardent friendship I have for you all. But do consider the excitement such news as I had received was calculated to produce. Positively I was on the point of setting off for Edinburgh! There is nothing in the review of which I am ashamed or afraid to own myself the writer. On the contrary, I think it calculated to do the Magazine great credit; but for me to have appeared ostentatiously volunteering that I was the author would have appeared to the public as positively *disgusting*, and I should never have heard the last of it. And it appeared so very unkind for you to have made such a resolve without consulting me. I appeared coolly sacrificed to some supposed views of expediency. But pray now forget it all. . . . You will have a *resplendent number*.

In reference to the same paper John adds: "Old Dickinson is the only person I have shown it to. He immediately exclaimed, 'First rate! This is an extinguisher.'" Dickens, however, has outlived many such extinguishers.

While Alexander was in London, Robert's letters from Edinburgh carry on very fully the records of the business and the incidents connected with it. The reprints of the novels, to which repeated reference has already been made, involved among other things a renewed bargain with "the Professor," about which Robert was a little nervous:—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

EDINBURGH, *March* 27, 1842.

After a little talk he asked about the reprint, as it was not advertised in the Magazine. I said I had no wish to put him to any trouble, and had thought it as well to delay the publication till his class rose. He said that it was of no consequence,

as he required money, and he wished to know what a volume in post octavo to sell at 8s. would produce. I told him that I could not give the exact amount, but would be ready on Monday to show him the cost and produce of such a volume. Accordingly we had a long discussion. I showed him the cost of a volume of 380 pages to sell at 8s., the profit on which amounted to £232. He said that he would never take the trouble to overlook his writings for such a return, as he fancied that we would by this calculation only give 100 guineas a vol. He then entered into a long disquisition about what he had heard authors should get, and the unreasonable profits of booksellers, at the same time admitting that he had always got from my father whatever he asked, but still that what he did get was not enough, and that people supposed he had a large income from the Magazine, which he at one time intended to have insisted upon, &c. I took all this very coolly, and do not think the Magazine will be alluded to again. I then said that what you and I wished to pay him was two hundred guineas a volume, but that if it was to be cheap we could not do so. He said that was exactly his own view—that he should have 2s. of profit on every copy of his books sold. I said that was impossible, but that I thought three volumes of the 'Recreations' at 10s. would sell, and accordingly I would consider the matter and write to you as to the price. He said he would write a few lines to me, which he did, but it was late before they came. And so to-day I had another talk, and agreed to give six hundred guineas for the 3 vols. I slept very little last night and could think of nothing else, and resolved this morning not to make myself miserable for another day or two, so I hope you will think I have done right in settling the matter. 2000 are sure to sell, and our profit will be nearly £200. From the way I have managed the matter the Professor is quite satisfied that we have made a very handsome bargain, which it is, and also that there was no attempt to blind him, which there was not.

"The sale of Alison beats cock-fighting," Robert says in another letter, amid many business details, which show how entirely the commercial side of the

firm was in his hands, and how firmly he held the strings, notwithstanding that he sometimes lay awake of nights and "made himself miserable" lest his brother should not perfectly approve :—

The book will be out of print shortly after the publication of the 10th volume, and I do not see how we can get the new edition ready before the 1st of January '43. I had a long talk with him on the subject, and he was greatly pleased with the idea of issuing in monthly volumes at 12s., to begin on the first of January. It may be of advantage to let the work go out of print, as it is astonishing how long copies hang on. If we can get a lot of plans executed as well as the maps at a cheap rate, I think it would take. [Here follows elaborate calculations of cost and sale.] It is a lovely prospect, 3000 going off monthly.

Then follows here that capricious and sudden break in the correspondence which is constantly to be found in similar correspondence without rhyme or reason, and we take up again the thread of the story in the records of 1843. The Branch had by this time been in existence for two years, and was doing yeoman's service for the firm; but the elder brothers still made their periodical visits to London, and it is from Alexander we hear first of another illustrious contributor, who grew in importance to the Magazine as the years went on. This was not the beginning of his intercourse with 'Maga,' as he had already contributed to the "splendid number" of September 1842, to which reference has been made. "I was with Bulwer this morning," writes Alexander, "and had some further talk with him about his 'Athens.'"

Alexander Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

PALL MALL, *3rd May* 1843.

I think we shall be able to make some arrangement with

him, but he has been accustomed to receive such large sums for his books that in such times as these he is difficult to treat with. I spoke to him particularly about writing for the Magazine, and he says he has a series in his head which he thinks will do for us. I mentioned before that he is not to complete the "Schiller" this month, but to wait for the July number. He says you have not answered a letter of his in which he desired you to ask Ferrier's advice about the arrangement.

The American Pirate, who has given us all so much trouble, was, it would appear, just beginning to make his depredations felt in those days. The French one they had apparently succeeded in silencing, as we hear of him no more. "I enclose you two more letters from Willans of Liverpool," says Alexander, "and I think his suggestion to get some influential M.P. to take up the whole thing is well worth attending to. I have given all the documents I have to Warren to draw up a little statement. Tom Longman has put off the meeting of the Booksellers, so that I have great doubts if anything will be done to bring the matter before Parliament this season." A few days later John wrote to Alexander, who by that time had returned home, an account of this meeting, at which he does not seem to have himself been present.

John Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

May 18, 1843.

Dickinson was in to-day. He says the meeting yesterday went off very languidly, the subscriptions still more so. Dilke of the 'Athenæum' made a furious attack upon Bentley, who, it seems, has been giving an English title-page to a Yankee book, and pirating in the very way we complain of. Dickinson spoke to his friend at the Custom-house about a copy of the list of books published; he said the Custom-house people are much annoyed at more having got about, and there will be some

difficulty in getting over them, but he will do it on the understanding that we are not to show it about.

Sir Francis Walker was in a few days ago, very grave about a meeting which was just going on at the Carlton on the part of the high-flying Tories, who had signified their intention of opposing Peel on the Canada Flour Bill, and saying that Sir Robert was angry, and threatening to resign. Sir Francis said it was an ugly fix, and did not think anything would come of it. I saw him again to-day, and he said there was still great contention at the Carlton. He was dining with some parliamentary people yesterday, and they were all laughing and saying when it came to the scratch all would go smoothly.

After this dip into politics, John returns to the subject of the booksellers' meetings, with a somewhat startling imputation upon a publisher whom we have hitherto been in the habit of regarding as the incarnation of respectability. "C.," he says, "made a most wretched exhibition at the Booksellers' Dinner."

He had a sort of prepared harangue; it was in a highly pharisaical, philanthropical tone, and the way he clipped the king's English and murdered the king's Scotch was enough to have moved a saint's bile, at least a Scotch saint's. He talked of himself and his Brother having always "contrayebuted ainything in their power to the good and instruction of their fellowmen." Everybody was disgusted by his presumption. I came up in a coach with M'Culloch and Dickinson. M. was particularly furious at "the impudence of the *damned* pirate!"

Thus, according to the judgment of the publishers, certain members of their own craft played into the hands of the American "Pirate" and shared his dishonourable gain.

The death of John Murray the elder brought much agitation into the Trade, and John Blackwood's letters are full of surmises whether his son, John Murray, would continue the business, about which there were

many speculations both in the Row and in Pall Mall. One thing the brothers were anxious to ascertain was whether it was "all right with Lockhart," a question of much importance. All tremors, however, on this subject were soon over, and "Lockhart thinks," John informs his brother, that all would go as usual, though even so important an authority as Mr Dickinson doubted, and the Row was kept for some time in suspense. Lockhart advised the young man "to do nothing rashly, but to examine matters well."

I asked Lockhart if he had read this No. of 'Maga.' He said: "Yes; indeed I have read nearly every article. It is exceedingly good, and most creditable." This is, I think, the general impression, but I have not seen many people who were qualified to give an opinion.

I had a long talk with Mallalieu the other day. He was advising most strenuously that we should make the pages of the Magazine like the Quarterlies, and give a sheet and a half or two sheets more, with more reviews; that books were stale before the Quarterlies got at them; and that we might knock them up. A short time ago Delane was talking to the same effect, and very earnestly too. Many people, I know, complain of the type as being difficult to read, and say that we should march with the tide. It is a dangerous thing tampering and changing with such a property, and it would look like one of the "New Series" devices adopted by unsuccessful periodicals; besides, it would be very painful to us to transmogrify the good old page with which we have prospered. The thing, however, is worthy of consideration, and if ever it was done, it should be at the beginning of next year. It might probably give a great start, and would be sure to be favourably noticed everywhere; but the danger of any change is the look of weakness.

Many such advices have been given during the course of the years, but fortunately 'Maga' has always retained her individuality, and "the good

old page" has witnessed no change. Her double columns have sustained the shock of all the "new series" imaginable, and save for much improvement of print and a little lightening of the amount of matter (which was a standing source of complaint, especially to English contributors), her original form has remained undisturbed, and I hope will long continue to do so.

I may add here a little correspondence which took place in this year (1842), and which brings into prominence the circle in London in which young John Blackwood spent a great deal of his time and derived much of his pleasure. The first letter is from Mrs Gore to Samuel Warren, and shows the position in which the Blackwood brothers stood in comparison with Messrs Bacon & Bungay of the Trade, and other well-known traffickers in books. This lady thanks the author of 'Ten Thousand a-Year' for his advice and introduction to the Messrs Blackwood, to whom, she adds, she has sent "a short article."

Mrs Gore to S. Warren.

OSTEND, *Nov.* 6.

I am almost equally gratified by your frankness about 'Ten Thousand a-Year.' The mystery is developed now; for I could never before understand how, languishing in the inglorious ease of competence, you were able to write with such spirit. For my part, I am convinced that no master work was ever achieved except under the stimulus of necessity. It is only when battling against a storm that the good ship puts forth its strength; and even from an iron intellect the sparks are only elicited by collision with the flints of this world. I have had, and above all am having, my share of these shocks; but, alas! without producing Ten Thousand a-year, either literally or literately.

I wrote to you that letter about 'Cecil' as a joke in retaliation

for your denying the authorship of your book. The mystery of mine arose from the fact that my name (having been appended to numerous translations of my husband's) is more hackneyed than my pen. The only three successful books I have produced —'Mothers and Daughters,' 'The Peeress,' and 'Cecil'—appeared anonymously. The last, however, was not successful, if I am to believe Mr Bentley, who made me refund £60 of the £300 he gave me for it, on pretence that it was unsaleable. At this moment he is demurring about paying a portion of £95 (!) which he agreed to give for a three-volume novel of mine called the 'Money-Lender,' that has had great success in a periodical. Colburn and Bentley are, in fact, the Scylla and Charybdis of the novel craft; and the latter, knowing that a deadly feud rageth between me and his opponent, swallows me in his whirlpool,—which I should bear better were not others dependent on my extrication.

I have now by me the best novel I have written, founded on interests connected with the rogueries of a plausible banker, maintaining an eminent position in public and private life on the means of his constituents, but with a strong comic interest throughout, which I shall have to give away to Bentley unless Blackwood should think it worthy of his Magazine and a reprint. If you thought any good would arise from it, I would send over a volume for his inspection. But if not, as much delay would be fatal at this book-bargaining session, I had better perhaps dispose of it to my Shylock.

Mr Warren answered his correspondent as follows :—

S. Warren to Mrs Gore.

Nov. 11, 1842.

I am greatly astonished and pained at the conduct you seem to have been experiencing, and delighted to be the means of introducing you to the Blackwoods, whom you will find gentlemen in every sense of the word, more particularly in money matters. I have ever found them very liberal and highly honourable in all respects. I never had a difference with any of them. Pray send off your first volume to Blackwood instanter. I have spoken to the Mr Blackwood

who resides here (22 Pall Mall, and who is in partnership with his brothers in Edinburgh), and he begs you will, if possible, send all three volumes. They will immediately read them, and let you know their opinion. It will (if suitable) appear first in the Magazine, and then be published separately, on terms which you must agree upon. By the way, remember the Tory character of Blackwood, and do not give your Whig friends too many flattering representations in your characters.

Finally, young John transmits the correspondence to his brother, with a pleasant prepossession in favour of the lady, who possessed, in addition to her other gifts, a beautiful daughter—a very moving argument to so young a man.

John Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

Nov. 11, 1842.

I enclose a letter from Mrs Gore. I am very much struck with it. Warren's reply is so characteristic that I copied it, that you might see fully how matters stood. What pleases me most is the circumstance of her not being the writer of all the things that have passed under her name. I have little doubt it will be a tale well worth publishing. It is just the sort of thing *Women* want in 'Maga,' and indeed 'Mothers and Daughters' is reckoned a sort of classic novel in that style, and is excessively clever. I hope what she seems to have sent you may prove good.

Here is a dilemma with which writers of fiction in general are not unfamiliar. I myself remember receiving on one occasion a cartel from a club, by which I was challenged for employing the writer's family name as the name of the highly honourable family with whose concerns I was engaged. The complainant in the present case had more occasion for his wrath.

Pall Mall, *July* 18, 1843.

Just before I started on Saturday an old gentleman, a dis-

senter, called to say that it had given him great pain to see in the Magazine, of which he was a constant reader, the attack upon Mr Clayton in 'Caleb Stukely'; that he supposed the coincidence of the name might be accidental, but there was a Mr Clayton, one of the ablest men of the sect to which he belonged, and the preacher in a chapel in the Poultry; that many people thought it was intended for him, and it might do him serious injury. I told him, of course, that we had never heard of Mr Clayton, nor I supposed had the author—that the tale was entirely fictitious. He said he was quite satisfied of that, and indeed he called as much from being a friend to the Magazine as to Mr Clayton; that he did not suppose Mr C. had ever read it, but thought it injured the character of the Magazine, and that one man in particular had said to him that he would have nothing to do with Mr C. after what he had read of him in 'Blackwood.' He wants us to put in a little note next month saying that 'Caleb Stukely' was entirely a work of fiction, both as regarded Mr Clayton's name and everything else. I told him, what I still think, that this would only call attention to the unfortunate coincidence of the name, and that everybody knew it to be entirely fictitious. He seemed a most respectable man, and rather pressed the matter. He said Mr Clayton knew nothing of his calling upon us, but if Mr C. found himself injured by it he might possibly bring an action for defamation against us. This is, I think, pretty well out of the question, and a note of a general character about the names used would look ill. But it is a great pity, for I hear that Mr Clayton is a man respected among his sect, and if at all like his friend who called, must belong to the most respectable class of dissenters. I would have written to Phillips to see what he says about it, but in the present state of his health everything at all likely to agitate him might be very injurious.

We pass from this to a graver piece of business. The introduction of John's visitors as "they" is a little perplexing; but we gather from further letters that "they" were a deputation of Commissioners appointed to prepare a statistical account of Ire-

land, and much in need of information how to do it:—

July 25.

The enclosed came to-day, as I went down. The principal thing they wanted to learn was how the 'Statistical Account of Scotland' had been conducted, and whether it had paid. I told them it had not paid, at which they were much surprised. One of them took down a few notes of what I said, and asked if I would tell them what the cost of the thing had been. Of course I said I could not do so accurately, but would get them as much information about it as was possible from my partners in Edinburgh. They asked what method I thought should be adopted, forgetting altogether the details, for something of the sort in Ireland. I said I thought the clergy, or rather the Government Commissioners. They said they wanted to embody any information we could give about the Survey in Scotland in a parliamentary paper, and would send such mems. as they had taken of what I said when written out for me to alter and correct. I am also to give along with this such information as we choose to give respecting the cost and loss. Will you send some general notion of the whole, or say what you think I should tell them? I am very doubtful if they will go on with anything on the score of our Statistical, as they seemed to have got nothing prepared, and to think that it might, as they supposed had been done in Scotland, pay its expenses.

July 26.

I saw Pringle to-day: he says the most active person in this Irish Commission is Mr Young his colleague, and he said he would put me in confidential communication with him, as I said we would not like to make a public report of the state of one of our publications. My present object in wishing to be introduced to Mr Young is to learn what they mean to do or to have done, as of that one learns nothing at a board meeting. Pringle says they are determined to do something, and to be appointed Publishers on Commission would be a very creditable as well as profitable thing, besides bringing us into contact with influential people.

There is to be a meeting on the ninth of August of publishers to consider the expediency of licensing parties in the Colonies, &c., to reprint English books at cheap rates, on their paying a certain sum to be agreed upon. I think it would be a most dangerous measure, as it is obvious we could not object to parties who had bought such legalised copies bringing them into this country for their own use. There would be an end of our total prohibition at once. Bulwer, James, and some of these lads have already been making arrangements with a German bookseller for the simultaneous publication of an authorised edition of their books. If men publish abroad of course it cannot be prevented; but for publishers as a body to give up all chance of selling their editions abroad or in the colonies would be perfect folly, and it runs directly in the teeth of what Government is so anxious for—viz., cheap editions; and all we would get for our licence would be a mere trifle except in the case of periodicals. The Longmans are very much disposed to forward this plan, but I must go to oppose it.

I saw Lockhart one day last week. He is looking very ill again, and seems as dull as can be. He said Murray seemed depressed and anxious, but that everything was to go on, and that Murray had written to him that the arrangements with himself were to go on as heretofore. He had been down to Rokeby, as Morritt had wished to see him, but he arrived too late. I rather hoped he might have got a legacy; but as he mentioned Morritt had lost all his lying money in a Yankee bank, I fear it is not so.

And here is a very astute and worldly minded suggestion on the part of young John:—

August 15.

What an amazing subscription they have got to the Church of England scheme of education! It is highly probable they will start a whole corps of school-books if they do not use the Christian Knowledge Society's ones. Would it not be advisable to write to Sinclair enclosing a subscription, and offering to advertise their lists in the Magazine gratis?

After this we fall back again upon publishers' news :—

I think I mentioned to you before that there had been a great row between Murray and Tegg about Southey's Life of Nelson. Tegg gave me a long rambling account of it some time, by which he seemed to be in the right. It ended by Murray writing a letter in which he said he could not publish the book. Four days after his doing so, down came that ass —— to Dickinson to ask him to mediate with Tegg, "that the book must be published, that it had been advertised everywhere," &c. (it was also printed off). Of course Tegg was on his high horse, and would hear nothing on the subject; on which the Borrow was suddenly started and printed in three days. After all this, fancy Murray indirectly offering to Tegg a remainder of about one thousand copies of Borrow's 'Bible.' The book was selling very well at the time. They give out that they have sold 7000. If true, this will not last at all events.

Nov. 7.

I called upon Bulwer yesterday. He liked the appearance of the sheet very much, and says he will cause no delay, but I doubt if it will be possible to get it out before Christmas; however, the beginning of the year is quite as good. . . . I asked Bulwer if he had been thinking of anything for the 'Magazine.' He said he feared we would not consider it worth while to give him his terms for a tale. I said, supposing the subject suitable, I thought there would be no difficulty about that. He then said he thought he had hit upon the most popular subject he had yet tried, but it would all depend on the execution of it, and he would talk more to me about it when he had got his plans better digested.

He is very anxious to preserve the most absolute incognito in the first instance, and afterwards to let it out if we thought it would be useful to the thing when published as a book. I should think £1000 or £1200 the very outside of what he can receive for a novel, and there is no saying what he might exert himself to do in the effort to create a new reputation.

This work, of which the eminent novelist spoke with such mysterious seductiveness, was 'The Caxtons,' published in the Magazine some years afterwards, and which was in fact a new beginning, more remarkable than the first, and one which showed a higher tone of mind and thought than many people had imagined the author of 'Pelham' to be endowed with; but it would be forestalling the progress of events to speak further of it here. Another notice of Bulwer follows a short time after, when John despatches to his brother the dedication of Bulwer's translations from Schiller, to Professor Ferrier. "It is very handsome [*i.e.*, the dedication], there are also very high compliments paid him in the advertisement," says John. "I think you had better not show it to Ferrier, as probably Bulwer will not wish him to see it until the book is printed and he sends him a copy."

The political paper had always been a great point in the Magazine, and there was nothing about which the brothers were more anxious. They were done sometimes by Alison, and these are characterised with enthusiasm as always satisfactory; sometimes by Warren very successfully, but not always so, and even calling forth considerable anxiety; and by various other lawyers and men of letters in London, along with a steady band in Edinburgh who were all earnest "on the right side," which at that time meant the cause of Protection and the Agricultural interest. Glimpses into the agitated condition of things at that great crisis of national life are given continually through those political articles. The one here referred to was evidently by Warren, but the commentary is altogether from the loyal Tory soul of young John:—

Dec. 20.

I hope the political paper is all right. Peel is certainly a slippery hand; but if he is to support Protective measures, he can only do so by our party placing confidence in him and supporting him. If he goes out, what will become of our party? The poor support of the Agricultural party is the very thing to drive a trimmer (as he probably is) to the other side for assistance. But it is all very well to hold this opinion about the matter, and quite a different thing to take an important step upon it; and I feel with you very anxious about it. I have no doubt the article is a good one, for great pains have been taken upon it. Should it injure the Magazine, Warren is the very man to struggle to repair it; but, on the whole, I think the chances are much in favour of its doing good.

Lockhart has just been here, looking very ill. I said, "You have no politics in the 'Quarterly.'" He said, "What is to be said about them, but abuse O'Connell and support the Corn Laws?"

Colburn's last feat [continues our young man] in the art of puffing a book (viz., by causing Colonel Davidson to have him up at the police court for [the return of] his manuscript, and then publishing the book within three days) has excited the admiration and envy of the whole trade. I thought Dickinson would have died on the spot when I told him of it: he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. He thinks Bentley will commit suicide from vexation that the master-thought had not occurred to him first.

Another story about Colburn, who was the favourite butt of the "Trade," is too good to be omitted, though I fear it has been published before:—

There is an amusing story about Colburn just now, that seeing Sydney Smith's letters about his American losses, he thought he must be in great want, and that it would be a fine time to make a bargain with him for a novel. So he went and made his proposal, with many expressions of admiration for the rev. gentleman's talent. The Canon thought he would test him, so said he liked the proposal much; that he would have an

Archdeacon for a hero, and make him intrigue with the Pew-opener, and that under the Hassock would be a good place for depositing the love-letters. "Oh," says Colburn, "we will leave all that to your well-known taste and judgment!" and came away quite cock-a-hoop.

These very discursive but also very living and real notes of society, and political and literary talk, such as were known in Pall Mall, go on in the young man's cheerful and familiar manner; reported sometimes on consecutive days, always at short intervals, for the amusement and information of the brothers, year after year. We see, as we read, the bales of books, under the invocation of George Buchanan; the office without, where Mr Langford conducted all the external business; and the private corner, where young John Blackwood reigned within, with the frequent visitor. Lockhart often; sometimes for a rarity the somewhat superfine Bulwer, hero and coxcomb; Warren, with his craze of self-admiration; the younger men, very often in want of a twenty pounds; the stray politicians occasionally coming to shake their heads over the slipperiness of Peel or the unprincipled actions of Disraeli, then the *bête noire*, though he afterwards became the honoured leader, of the party, —all pass before us like a panorama, or rather like the new substitute for that old-fashioned diversion, the cinematograph, where movement adds to the charms of the picture. It is indeed real life with all its trivialities, the great and the small mingled together, and in the record of every day a joke against Messrs Bacon & Bungay taking up as much space as the best advices or most penetrating remarks. I had thought of classifying these anecdotes to make them

less fragmentary; but by doing so something of the artless strain of life, the succession without perspective, always graphic, always sincere, without bias or effort, would be lost. Sometimes our young man is very serious, especially about politics; sometimes gay, lending his ear to every jest; always interested, respectful, and affectionate while he reports, for instance, the utterances of Lockhart, one of the household gods of his life; not indisposed, though affectionate also, to draw out the absurdities of another important figure; always reporting, with a flying pen and no intrusive thought of writing a clever letter, what will please or gratify the home circle. The records have all the qualities, all the weakness, and at the same time the force, of actual life. The accounts come in one paragraph, and detailed reports of how many 'Book of the Farm,' how many sets of Alison, have gone off; then we come to the visits and the sayings. "There is no more Magazine gone," he says with doubtful grammar; and then proceeds:—

January 3, 1844.

I saw Lockhart yesterday, and had a long talk with him. He liked this number much. I am glad to say that he abused the 'Edinburgh' very much. Of the Irish article he said just what I thought, that there is nothing new in it—that it is exceedingly mischievous and wholly unprincipled, and impudent in the highest degree. He was talking of a number of things, of which I will give you a full account to-morrow.

I dined out at Kensington yesterday with old M'Queen. Major C. Harris, who has just published a large book upon the Highlands of Ethiopia, was there. He says it is quite wonderful how many of M'Queen's speculations about Central Africa he found correct. Major Harris is living in this house, so we walked home together. His conversation was very interesting.

He is particularly angry at the way we are allowing the French to form settlements on the Red Sea from our idiotic notions about non-intervention, when the people are ready and willing to sell to us, and mentioned several instances. I asked him what he thought of giving us a memorandum of these sort of things, with a sketch of his own views, which might be embodied, so far as they were approved of, in a review of his book in the Magazine. He said at once that a review in the Magazine would be of very great service to him: any information such as I alluded to he would place entirely at our disposal, and we might use it or review the book as we thought fit. Holme would be the best man to do a good article, but he is so slow and bigoted about aggression on our part. Croly would make a brilliant article, having good authority to go upon; or perhaps Sir John M'Neill would do it. Major Harris's first book, 'Wild Sport in Southern Africa,' was a very good one.

January 4, 1844.

I mentioned that I had seen Lockhart the day before yesterday: he was making his usual style of remarks upon many things. He particularly abused Tytler's last volume and his whole work, his total want of historical style and colloquialism. He said that he and Alison were "a pair." Of course I stood up for both, and as he had begun the subject, said how unfair the remarks on Alison in the last 'Quarterly' are. He was quite surprised to hear that Alison did not particularly specify when Louis was executed, &c. He said that Croker sent him the article, that he never referred to the book itself, but had a great work cutting out two pages of mere bitter attack upon Alison. He gave a most humorous description of the mode in which Croker reads a book—viz., with one eye shut, so that he never sees but one side of a page as he turns over the leaves.

He [Lockhart] has by no means given up the novel he has so long talked of. His great fear seems to be discovery of the authorship. He says that if he could get over the first number without being detected, he would feel all right. "Perhaps I may surprise you with the first part on your table some of these days."

January 6, 1844.

Lockhart called on Thursday evening. He said the Memoir of Maginn beat everything, but the particularly bad part of it was the little brute attacking Mrs Maginn. There is a Greek quotation which implies that the Doctor's greatest misfortune was being united "gunaika aischran," which signifies a worthless or degraded woman. From this it would appear that Mrs Maginn could have nothing to do with the Memoir. Lockhart suggests the chances are that this little vagabond has prigged my father's letters. His quarrel with Mrs Maginn arose from her refusing to let him have one of her daughters. If Lockhart's suggestion is right, we must see and recover the letters.

I sent the Alison as he requested; his mem. was simply a reference to the pages. I mentioned to him there were two ways of noticing a blunder. He said if noticed at all it should be done fairly, and this would be a check upon Croker. Of that I am doubtful. He also said he had taken care to let Croker know that it was only mentioned incidentally by me, and that there was no communication with Alison. How is the thing stated in the first edition of the book? A note like that in the 'Quarterly' has more effect than you would think. Several people have mentioned it to me, among the rest Clarke, who said it had given him a notion that Alison was exceedingly inaccurate.

It may not be out of place here to quote a letter from Alison in respect to the first of those articles which had on several occasions appeared in the 'Quarterly,' attacking his accuracy, and indeed patriotism, in conveying to his readers the impression that Wellington, in his last campaign, had been taken by surprise and all but out-generalled by Napoleon :—

A. Alison to John Blackwood.

I had long ago resolved, and had always acted upon the principle, never to suffer myself to be drawn into a controversy with any opponent, how weighty or respectable soever, but whenever

I met with criticism on my History to study it attentively, adopt at once its conclusions when they appeared to me well founded, and support my own statements with additional arguments and authorities when on weighing both sides I still deemed myself in the right. I have not deviated and will not deviate from this rule in the present instance.

Yesterday evening was the first time that most harassing and laborious employments, arising from the Lanarkshire Riots and appeals in the Registration Court, have left me time since the 'Quarterly' was published to study its contents. I did so accordingly with great attention, and verified all my own authorities which were questioned, and this morning I have, in some few instances, corrected my statements, and in others more numerous added other additional arguments and authorities to support my own views already given. The corrections adopted are chiefly verbal, and, with the exception of a line to specify more fully the service of General Hill in the action, which was material and previously unknown to me, of hardly any importance.

On the two most important subjects at issue between us—viz., the story of Fouché having deceived the Duke of Wellington, and of the Duke having been surprised at the outset of the campaign—my opinion and statements remain the same, with the following exceptions and additions:—

1st. I have thrown Fouché's statement, Sir Walter Scott's confirmation of it obtained at Waterloo ('Paul's Letters,' Misc. Works, v. 97), and the Duke's denial of any intercourse direct or indirect with the veteran traitor, into the form of a note, and pointed to the conclusion that the two statements are not contradictory or irreconcilable, but that giving implicit credit (as of course I do) to the Duke's disclaimer, the probability is that he was misled by persons with whom he was in communication at Paris, and who, unknown to him, were the secret agents of the French Minister.

2nd. On the vital point of whether or not the Duke was surprised in the outset of the campaign, necessity and a regard to historic truth, as well as to my own character as a Historian, have compelled me to add a full note, in which I have adduced positive proofs, all drawn from the Duke's correspondence

published by Gerrwood, which demonstrate that he was *surprised*, and that but for the errors of Napoleon in not taking advantage of the opening thus given him, it would probably have been attended with fatal consequences. I had reflected for nearly thirty years on the subject, and withheld these proofs, and leant rather to the supposition of Fouché's double treason being the cause of the surprise, *purposely* out of my high regard for his Grace; but the ill-judged zeal of his friends will soon compel me to bring them forward. Considering the strictures in the 'Quarterly' as a whole, I do not know whether to admire most the candour, which, after stating that I say Wellington was out-generalled by Napoleon in the outset of the campaign, conceals what I add in the very next page that Wellington out-generalled him in the end; the discretion, which, dwelling largely on minor omissions or errors which none but those personally about the Duke could rectify, passes over in silence my vital statement that the army was so stationed in cantonments that infantry alone, without either cavalry or artillery, were exposed to the attack of all the three arms at Quatre Bras; the accuracy, which, accusing me of negligence in not studying Plotho as to the Russian returns, is, I find on examination, *erroneous*, while I am *correct* in every reference to or figure drawn from thence; the courtesy, which treats with such marked temper the different opinions of a writer who has never mentioned the Duke but with the utmost respect; or the judgment, which has led a leading Conservative journal to speak in such a tone of a writer on the first occasion on which they mention him, who has perhaps done their cause some little service. I shall never, however, be betrayed by the imprudent zeal of his friends, who possibly have less temper with the pen in their hand than they have had in the field, to utter one sentiment of disrespect or one word of asperity to the illustrious Hero whose exploits it is the main object of my work to commemorate. And if I have spoken freely of his errors as I have done of his greatness, it is because I feel that Fearlessness is the first quality of a Historian as it is of a General; because I am not the Panegyrist of any nation or man, but the annalist of an Epoch in which great and general principles were brought into collision; because I am an

independent man writing for Posterity, not the Eulogist of any party or individual how illustrious soever in these times; because I feel that "Praise undeserved is Satire in disguise," and that they are the worst friends of a great character who ascribe to him the perfection which never yet belonged to any child of Adam; and because my praise, when it is bestowed (and it is so often and warmly) on the Duke, will not lose its weight in future times from the circumstances that I dealt out the same impartial measure to a countryman victorious and in power as to his enemy defeated and in his grave.

This exalted tone of self-defence was no doubt justifiable (without entering into the merits of the case) in a historian so popular and widely read as Alison was at that time; and it is, if somewhat solemn, and deeply conscious of the weight of his work and the importance of his position as the first of that profession among his contemporaries, dignified and becoming. Posterity, we fear, has not taken up his great work as the legacy and inheritance which he expected it to be; but it must not be forgotten that he was at this moment the first of historical writers —at all events, in the estimation of the crowd.

John Blackwood resumes his cheerful commentary upon affairs in general without further notice of this controversy; indeed the young man himself was on both sides, as is not unusual in a young man. Alison was the great Blackwood historian, therefore he was right; Lockhart was the traditional friend and supporter of the Magazine, and therefore it was unlikely that he should be in the wrong. But the 'Quarterly' was quite another affair, and it and Croker, the author of the attacks, could be freely offered up to the infernal gods. He proceeds to his usual chronicle.

January 6, 1844.

I fear that telling Mrs Gore we liked short lively papers has opened a sluice over our heads: two came over yesterday; the one I read is light and amusing, but she might have made much more of it. It was a capital suggestion of Isabella's to me. I mentioned it to Mrs Gore while writing, saying perhaps she might introduce it in a humorous notice of the books addressed to ladies.

I was much amused yesterday by a Mr Glover who called about a pamphlet on Ireland. He said he had previously called in Albemarle Street to see if they would do anything with it. They declined, saying they required to be very cautious, as everything they issued was looked upon as *semi-official!*

When the 'Heretic' was subscribed, Green quashed it at once by saying, "Nobody's translations can sell except Miss [Mrs?] Howitt's."

I was very glad to see Peel so distinct upon the Corn Laws. W. would amuse you not a little. In his secret heart he attributes all these agricultural meetings to his article, if not Peel's firmness as well. I have got the whole of Bulwer (Schiller) in type at last. It is, I think, an interesting Memoir; there is too much of that inflated nonsense about "Mind" and "Ideal," which seems inseparable from all writers on German matters. The author of 'Pelham' taking up sober Christian philosophy is very good. I think his mind must be in a transition state like Schiller's.

Feb. 20.

I saw Lockhart yesterday; he was expressing very great admiration for the Professor's speech, for its skill and eloquence. He also said, like many others, how much he wished the Professor would come up to town this spring. There would be a public dinner, of course. Leaving after the Session was up would bring him just in time for the Literary Fund dinner. One of his speeches would be a great contrast to the prosing usual then. It would also materially assist the 'Recreations,' I think.

The name of Mrs Gore is another of those which is almost forgotten now. She was a very popular

fashionable novelist in those days, turning out one piece of fiction after another as fast as pen and hand could go. I can remember the discussion which arose, and excited and puzzled the newspapers as well as perhaps a portion of the literary classes, when there appeared anonymously a novel called 'Cecil,' which was still more fashionable and more popular than Mrs Gore, as if a new star of magnitude had risen upon the world, until it was discovered that the new planet was but the old one in a new development, and the author of 'Cecil' Mrs Gore herself. To mark the change of ideas, too, which is curious, her most important book, called 'Mrs Armytage,' was the story of a lady, an heiress, who had brought a fine estate to her husband,—a fact which he recognised by leaving it to her again on his death, rights of women to their own property being at that time non-existent. There was a son, however, a fine young man and the hero of the book, who was considered a much-injured man, the mother a heartless and abominable woman for not retiring from her own house when he attained his majority, and the father something worse than a fool for giving her the power of retaining what was her own. What an extraordinary change of sentiment has come over the world since then!—and Mrs Gore, like so many others, is clean forgotten and out of mind, as if she had never framed a plot or illustrated any of the dilemmas of fashionable life. There is a good deal about her in these letters, and though John Blackwood felt that to invite her to contribute to the Magazine was as the letting out of waters, he yet came round to the idea that "those little sort of sketches" made

"capital light weight for the Magazine, and are much liked":—

In reply to the note I wrote to her after the first one, that these were the sort of papers we preferred, she said, "I daresay you know we poor scribblers do not prefer them, as they take twice as much out of us as common tale-spinning.

The following introduces, though dimly, a more attractive figure:—

I dined on Friday last with Phillips. Thomas Hood was there, a very quiet fellow, evidently in the most miserable health. He is in a dreadful fix with the man who is associated with him in the unhappy magazine, so I daresay it will speedily come to a close. He has applied to Phillips to arbitrate. P. says the other fellow deluded Hood with the notion that he had money: it turns out that he had only £100, which he has never produced, and grabbed the money received at the office as it came in. Do not say anything about this.

Phillips himself is the most extraordinary character. I begin to think he is the Wandering Jew. You cannot name any human being but he knows all about him or has had something to do with him. Like Warren, too, he is constantly lighting upon copies of 'Caleb' in the most remote corners of small libraries. There is not, however, a single copy of the book moving.

Again it is politics that are in the ascendant, as we watch the world go round through the windows of the office in Pall Mall:—

March 29, '44.

Sir Edward [Bulwer] was here to-day, and sat talking for a long time. He proposed doing a thing with which I am much pleased—viz., a small octavo volume advocating the Corn Laws and the principle of Protection generally, and ridiculing Cobden and Bright. He says he has always entertained those opinions, and such a work coming from him would likely make a hit. He praised Alison's paper of last month very much. He says

he has never read much in favour of Protection but everything that has been published against it, and feels confident of being able to dispose of their arguments. Also he said, "I am generally surrounded with Whigs, and have had little difficulty in getting the better of them in our numerous discussions about it." I gave him Alison on 'Population' for it. If he does the thing, he will set to work immediately. He has a lot of materials. His notion is that by advertising it strongly a great hit might be made; that the plan would be to avoid risk by not printing largely, but the volume being small to keep the type standing. I have for some time suspected that Bulwer was becoming a Conservative. Some time ago Thackeray told me that Bulwer had withdrawn his name from the Reform Club. Webster was in the other day. I said, "So you have lost Sir Edward over the way." He was quite taken aback, and exclaimed, "Who told you that? It must have been one of the Committee or himself, for we" (the Committee) "have written to remonstrate with him, and his name is not yet off." It was rich, the blockhead telling me this.

Mr Stafford O'Brien called here to-day from the Agricultural Protection Society. He said they had not yet decided upon a general publisher: perhaps it might be worth our while to send in an estimate. Olivier, Ridgway, and Clowes have done so. I said we would do the things for them at about cost price, but I did not understand how an estimate could be given unless some specific page were fixed, and he could not explain and was rather hurried. What do you think of this, and how far would it be worth our while to be known as their recognised publishers? The only thing against it is that it might hurt the independent reputation of the Magazine. It would certainly be the best thing for making us politically known in London. That no time may be lost, I have ordered a few full pamphlet pages to be set, to learn Bradbury's lowest charge. While with me Mr O'Brien noticed the Ordnance report about Ireland lying upon the table. He said: "I hope you will have an article on that. If so, I shall be happy to furnish you with a great deal of curious information about the necessity of such a work, which might be embodied in your paper. I consider it one of the most important things for the civilisation of Ireland to have

such a work: half the mischief arises from disputes about boundaries and so forth." I said it was a very likely subject for us to take up, and if so, we should be much obliged to him for facts. He said Sir Robert required spurring on about the thing. I think we ought to do something about this. I am sure Mr Young also would be willing to give some particulars that he could not urge in his report. Now Croly could dress them beautifully into an article.

March 30.

That hound Croker has again two or three malignant sneers at Alison in the 'Quarterly.' I have no doubt that Alison could by scrutinising and comparing dates point out scores of blunders in these two very articles, and then make a handsome apology for such blunders as they have been able to point out in his immense 10 volumes.

This is an extremely good suggestion, and might be recommended to all distressed historians suffering under the stings of the wasps and flies which every such work brings to light. There follows a great deal of commercial discussion between the brothers as to the problematical advantages of becoming publishers to the Protectionists; and many calculations as to what could or could not be done go from Pall Mall to Edinburgh, the young Branch showing himself as capable of considering the question of print and paper, of possible gain or loss, as he was to interview his many visitors or give a clear and sound opinion on the capabilities of a contributor. Whether a paper at 7s. 6d. a ream was not as good for all practical purposes as one at 9s., how cheaply a very large number could be printed, — "Cayley talked of 50,000 or even 250,000,"— and what margin of profit could be got out of the transaction, are subjects to which John bends all his faculties. "They were very fair in their talk, and

said they did not wish us not to have a fair percentage, but acting for a body was very difficult." Unfortunately I do not know how the discussion ended; but it brings the representative of the house of Blackwood into much political news and gossip. "I do not like Peel's speech last night at all," he says; "it is so hard and unconciliating. If he goes on long this way, he will break the party into bits."

18th June '44.

I should not wonder to see him throw over the Corn Laws altogether. The end of his speech about gradual progression looks very like it, and there is evidently bad blood between him and the squires. Newdigate and O'Brien were both here to-day: they were not saying much beyond wishing that for the sake of the party Peel had not spoken last night, but left it to Stanley.

June 27.

There has been a great row over at the Carlton, and there is a requisition signed by 116 members stigmatising in the strongest language the traitor who sent a report, and that a garbled one, of their private meeting to the 'Times,' and calling a general meeting for the 10th of July, if possible to bring it home to some one, and dismiss him from the club. O'Brien and Newdigate say there is little doubt among them that Disraeli is the delinquent. Lockhart has no doubt, and says it is not the less likely that Ben is one of the 116 who signed the requisition!

How curious are the revolutions of time! It was the Tory party itself which held "Ben" in such low esteem, and readily believed every suggestion to his discredit. What would the men of '44 have said, not only to the high title and high office of Lord Beaconsfield, but of those mounds of primroses and the glow of popular praise which now encircle his name? The Carlton to a man would have scoffed at any such pos-

sibility, and yet there stands the much-abused, the much-distrusted, the Oriental, the Jew, watching over the gates of Parliament for ever, as a typical English Minister, with more than half the men and all the women to be seen about that locality wearing upon his day the English wild-flower, type of modesty and simplicity, which the astutest of men has identified with himself. It is one of those amazing incredible revolutions which are more wonderful almost than any other kind of political convulsion bearing that name.

And here is another pioneer of a movement so momentous in its importance now, so little thought of then :—

Old M—— was here to-day: he is very anxious to do for the next number a paper on Africa, geographical and otherwise. It will require a small map, a little larger than a page of the Magazine, and would extend to nearly a sheet. He says the state of Africa and what can be done from it to assist our tropical colonies is most seriously occupying the attention of Government, and I daresay he would make an important paper. Will you write what you think of it by return, as the map must be put in hand immediately? This enthusiasm about the infernal country is really laughable, and his rage at some people who do not coincide in his views—"the damnedest villains," he says.

This cheerful life, and commentary upon life, was now, however, drawing near to its end. The establishment in Pall Mall was expensive, though otherwise so satisfactory, and it gradually appeared that a more completely trade establishment in the Row might be more convenient, seeing how much of the more solid business of the firm had to be transacted there. I cannot tell whether the failing health of Alexander already gave rise to the fear that the

younger brother might be wanted in Edinburgh. At all events, in the end of '44 or beginning of '45 inquiries were going on about a new lodging in London for the Blackwood books and Magazine. If there is, perhaps, a tone of regret in John's letters over this change, it is easily kept under, and the note of cheerfulness is unchanged while once more he goes about looking for suitable premises, until circumstances and expediency pointed out the establishment in the City as most suitable in every way. Meanwhile everything had gone on in the parent house in Edinburgh as it had done since their father's death — the two elder brothers forming a sort of double head, two in one, to the household, guiding and controlling everything, yet acknowledging the mother's sway in her department with the faith of two boys in her admirable domestic arrangements, and preserving the union of the family through all the independence of their mature manhood as absolute as in their childhood. I scarcely know what words to use to describe this complete—so complete as never to be remarked, the simple course of nature —union and oneness of the young men at the head of the house. The letters which I have quoted are addressed to them indifferently — sometimes to Alexander, sometimes to Robert, without any distinguishing difference—as of different departments in business or interests in life. It is a sort of union more common among women than among men. Everybody has known the conjunction of two feminine names, which a child or ignorant person might imagine almost to be one and apply to either; but it is seldom that we find two vigorous young men, each

with their individualities, in the prime of life and all its force, existing in so close a union—the Alexander-Robert, Robert-Alexander, two in one, both of the home and the business. It may have been remarked that Alexander's letters had recently been of a somewhat sterner tone, without the impartial light-heartedness of young John taking everything as it came, or the plain good sense of Robert, who was less easily moved either to indignation or to enthusiasm. He had always been, perhaps, the most emotional, feeling the deprivations imposed upon him by weakened health and the grip of the Asthma-fiend, concerning which the sufferer is so often assured that it is not deadly, though it entails, perhaps, the most overwhelming oppression and *malaise* that can be endured by the human frame and spirit. These sufferings clouded over the best part of his life, and though we hear less of them in the later years, there is a suggestion of this *malaise* in much of his correspondence. It would not seem, however, to have intruded into the gentleness of life and household quiet.

The family had been increased and much exhilarated by the arrival in the summer of 1842 of the two little boys, the eldest sons of Captain Blackwood in India, who gave that ever-delightful new interest in the house which the arrival of children brings. Uncles and aunts vied with each other in adoration of these little Anglo-Indians, aged respectively six and four. But the recollections of the little Willie and George clung most tenderly of all to the memory of Alexander—perhaps all the more tenderly that he was so soon taken from them. Mr William Blackwood, the present head of the house, was one of those much-beloved

boys; and he has told me, with water in his eyes after all this long tract of years, how he would be set to learn his lessons, a restless child, in his uncle's bedroom, sure there of never being sent away as disturbing, and always free to ask questions and claim explanations from the busy man who had ever leisure for him. It is a delightful picture to come in thus at the end, to throw a sweet illumination of affection over the life so soon to drop into the shadows of a premature end. These new little figures bring into prominence once more the Indian family, already full of children, like the parent house from which they sprang. Captain Blackwood's letters are always interesting, reflecting vividly the stirring and many coloured world from which they came, which was then in much agitation, with many wild and warlike figures passing across the foreground, and wars and rumours of wars everywhere. I have hesitated as to whether I should quote further from these interesting records of private opinion and judgment at such a crisis. They have little, however, to do with our present subject, and I pass them by reluctantly. But the father's anxious mention of his sons comes in, by right of nature:—

William Blackwood to his Brother Alexander.

CHIRRAHPOONGIE, 13*th March* 1843.

I cannot say how much we feel the kindness the two boys experienced from you all, and how much reason we have to rejoice in the happy home provided for them. We often, often think and talk of it. I hope Willie will take better to his books shortly. I am very anxious he should learn his lessons well when he gets a little older. It is not for what they learn, but it is the habit of applying to a thing and keeping the mind fixed on it; and unless that is got when young, I suspect it is

very seldom acquired afterwards. I know I never had my mind fixed on anything at the High School; and I think the tutors we had, with the exception of Aitken, poor fellow!—and I recollect he used to wallop me well and really make me understand a thing: but the rest, I was going to say, only crammed us,—at least I can speak for myself.

The children naturally are in the front of each letter, with renewed hopes for greater diligence on the part of Willie (aged six!), and regrets over the delicacy of George (who grew up to command his battery in other Indian wars, and died with his back against the wall and his face to the crowd of gleaming faces of the foe at Maiwand); and there are a few other portions of individual history mingling with strong remarks on the recall of Lord Ellenborough, and other events of the Anglo-Indian world. The modest soldier mentions in passing that he had received "acknowledgments" from Sir Henry Hardinge, as Governor of Bengal, "for the manner in which I brought to a speedy and successful termination the affair with the Rookees." "It was a lucky business," he adds, "both in its quickness and success, for had we delayed we should have had a deal of sickness: as it was, the jungle fever laid up about 10 per cent of the men, but not for upwards of a fortnight, in some cases three weeks, after we had returned to cantonments." What the affair with the Rookees was we have no further information.

It was when all were in this cheerful routine of life that the health of the eldest son, so long threatened, but which had appeared to improve by a temporary cessation of his special illness, all at once gave way. There does not seem to have been any alarm until suddenly the thunderbolt out of a clear sky cut the

family life into a new division, and ended the long and prosperous course of common work and life. The best account I can find of this sad event is in a letter from John Blackwood, dated from George Street, Edinburgh, the 1st of April 1845.

John Blackwood to Sir E. L. Bulwer.

My brother Robert and I feel greatly indebted to you for the kind manner in which you write sympathising with us in our most severe affliction.

We are also much gratified by your kind expression of the estimation in which you held our dear brother Alexander. His death was very sudden: he had only been laid up for a few days, and was apparently getting over a sharp attack of illness, when, on the evening of Thursday (the 20th), he had a violent relapse and sank rapidly. The long-continued and repeated illness from which he had suffered for very many years seemed to have worn out his constitution. He was not married, but there is a numerous family of brothers and sisters to bewail his loss, and our mother is now very ill and feeble, sadly bowed down by the loss of her eldest son.

I shall be here for some time, as there is, of course, a great deal for both my brother and myself to attend to.

Thus the great first blow fell, and the admirable brotherhood sustained a breach from which it never recovered. Though things still went on for years, the younger brother supplying the place of the elder as much as that was possible, Robert Blackwood, I think, was never the same man. The early bond, so faithful and so close, could not be renewed, and change and shifting arrangements took the place of the twofold head, which had seemed an emblem of solidity and force. Both the elder brothers had laboured enormously, overtasking their young strength at the time of their father's death; and these extraordinary efforts seldom fail to claim their price.

CHAPTER XXII.

37 PATERNOSTER ROW.

CHANGES IN THE LONDON ESTABLISHMENT—JOHN BLACKWOOD RETURNS TO EDINBURGH—PEEL AND DISRAELI—A POLITICAL DEADLOCK—NEW SCHEMES—LOCKHART AND CHRISTOPHER NORTH—FIRST-FRUITS OF THE PRINTING-OFFICE—A NEW WEEKLY PAPER PROPOSED—SALE OF THE SCOTT COPYRIGHTS—JOHN RUSKIN—BULWER LYTTON MAKES A SECOND REPUTATION ANONYMOUSLY—G. P. R. JAMES—SIR JOHN M'NEILL—THE PROFESSOR'S LAST CONTRIBUTION TO 'MAGA.'

AFTER this sad crisis in the family it seems to have been the opinion of all that John's removal from London to Edinburgh was indispensable. I find a letter from his brother James, who had evidently become a trusted adviser in all difficulties, to this effect, in the summer of the year which carried off the elder brother. Robert would seem to have accompanied John to London to decide about the removal from Pall Mall and the new establishment in the Row.

James Blackwood to his Brother John.

6th May 1845.

I conclude from the terms of your and Bob's last letters that you will by this time have settled on the depôt in Paternoster Row. I think this arrangement the best you can do, so far as can be judged at present. The expense, even including you or Bob going up every other month, will not be so great as the commission to an agent, and there are many advantages in

other respects in having a place of your own, in keeping up and extending the business connection and with authors, in which no agent could do anything for you but rather the reverse; and the advantage of you or Bob constantly visiting is very great. Even now the journey is nothing, and in the course of two years I think we may safely reckon that it will be done in twelve hours, or even less. This, whilst it will increase the facility, will also increase the necessity of your being frequently there.

The London arrangement, however, is a matter of minor importance,—the grand point is the business here, and to carry it on efficiently I think it is almost essential that both you and Bob should be here. The many petty details necessarily involved in so extensive a business, which, though trifling in themselves, require constant attention, and the regulation of which cannot with safety be devolved on any but a principal, would, combined with the more serious and important matters requiring deliberate consideration, be too much for any one individual; indeed, the very worry of these details would be such that it would prevent his giving that serious deliberation so necessary in coming to a conclusion. Besides, I doubt if Bob's health would stand it. Whereas the division of labour and relief from the constant pressure of sole responsibility of itself enables the mind much more readily to come to a sound result, to say nothing of the inestimable advantage of mutual consultation.

To all these sound arguments John seems to have yielded. He was never fond of London in later life, but no doubt it was a trial more or less for a young man to give up the visits and the gaiety of Pall Mall. In June Robert wrote to him from Edinburgh, praying that "nothing may occur to detain you in London after the removal." And accordingly in the beginning of July, the new premises being arranged and settled, with Mr Langford, whose value his employers had now fully learned, placed in charge, John returned to Edinburgh. The letters henceforward are from both alternately, as they make their visits of

inspection and supervision — sometimes Robert and sometimes John; and we get a fuller view of the elder brother, whose share of the correspondence, however, was not so amusing as John's. Neither is it, I think, so good as when Robert was half Alexander as well as himself. He was now himself alone, without the modification of the other, and at first there is an appearance of diminished decision, and a relaxation of force and character, which are touching when we remember that the better half of him had been torn away:—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

When I got home last night I found a letter from Warren, who seems to be greatly annoyed by what I said: this has vexed me a good deal, and I would have written to him to-day, but it is difficult to know what to say to him. I have not enclosed his letter, as there is nothing in it, but he will have already communicated to you to-day. Tell him to take his own way in everything, and when we make any suggestion it is merely for his own consideration.

"But do not," he adds, "be guided by anything I say, as they are merely thrown out as hints, and circumstances may change, so that you must act entirely on your own judgment, and I am sure you will be right."

The next we hear is from the younger, whose turn it evidently was to visit London and the Row. It was a time when politics were in the ascendant, at the very climax of the Corn Law agitation, which had gradually leavened the country and brought about one of those great convulsions in high place which popular agitation on so great a scale cannot but produce in the end. Sir Robert Peel, so long trusted, so long

doubted, had now made up his mind at last, and the breathless excitement of the moment, the almost awe of what all felt to be a great catastrophe, is brought near to us by these familiar letters, as could scarcely be done by any other form of narration :—

23rd January 1846.

Yesterday will long be a memorable day in the commercial and political history of the country, and I am glad indeed that I had an opportunity of being present in the House of Commons, although I listened with anything but pleasant feelings. I shall never forget the scene. It was soon seen that Lord Francis Egerton was going for entire Free Trade, but the first regular sensation was when he said, "The time has now arrived," &c. I gave an involuntary bound on my seat, and from the rustling sound I am sure that the same sort of electric shock ran through the whole of the crowded House. There was a great buzz and noise in the House when the Address was being read, after the speeches of the proposer and seconder. The moment the Speaker had concluded Peel started forward to the table, and there was most perfect silence.

No doubt Peel's speech was a most able and eloquent one, but the impression it leaves upon me is intense dislike and disgust. The worst part to my mind was the way in which he talked of the potato disease: it was the regular "snuffled in Joseph Surface tone." In a few most impressive sentences, delivered in a solemn and even tremulous tone, he begged his friends to hear the evidence of approaching famine upon which he acted. I thought, as every one present must have done, that he was coming out with some overwhelming evidence of failure of crops in all parts of the country. Instead of that he read a few isolated letters which, with the exception of the Lord Lieutenant's, might, I have no doubt, be got up at any season. The cool way in which he took the merit of the rise of wages during the last two years was very offensive, when no one knows better than himself that it is entirely owing to the railways.

The gloomy silence on his own side of the House during his

speech was very striking. Not one solitary cheer, so far as I could observe, came from behind him. His complaint of his supporters' conduct to him was uncommonly well done, and was the best instance of "taking the first word of flyting" that ever I saw.

Lord John Russell made, I think, a very good appearance; indeed, although I have heard him very often, I never before heard him make a good speech. There was none of his usual mumbling and stuttering, but everything was plain and distinct both in language and sentiment. Nothing could more completely prove the prostration of the Conservative and Agricultural party than that such a swab as Disraeli should be the first to rise from among them on such a grand occasion. If he had not gone too far and continued too long, his speech would have been very effective. The House was, I think, beginning to get sick of him, and the current, if anything, changing in Peel's favour, from the violent personal way he carried on. I have not seen any one to-day to know what is saying, but exchanged a word or two with some of the Agricultural party as I came through the cloak-room. They only said, "Things could not be worse." It was painful to see the jolly-looking Squire part of the House so crestfallen.

I feel very anxious about what line we should take in the Magazine. I am almost inclined to think that, though the cause is utterly hopeless, what would be most agreeable to our own feelings—say, to go slap against Peel—would be best for the interests of the Magazine.

Robert replied to this letter, begging his brother (who had contemplated returning home) to remain and gather as much information as he could. "We are sadly at a loss what to say about Politics," he adds; "the greatest difficulty is that there is no one we can trust. The Professor, as one might expect, is clear for Peel, but every one else seems to be staggered," and he bids his brother consult Warren, and get, if possible, a paper from him. John resumes at once his narrative of the situation:—

26th January 1846.

I had a long chat with O'Brien to-day at the Protection Society rooms. He says their forces are in great disorder, but determined to fight. He says they are on their beam-ends for want of a man to take the lead and reply to Peel. They seem to contemplate giving the documents, &c., to Disraeli, to make a statement. O'Brien is a very amusing fellow, and was exceedingly good upon "Dizzy's" want of the necessary weight. He says it is astonishing the number of *heeltaps* in the way of reputation that come to them. He does not seem to entertain much real hope of an effective resistance, but thinks they may be able to break it in some way by demanding time for consideration. He says the farmers are most determined, and that if the Corn Laws are done away with there will be no way of getting them to vote for Conservatives in the way they have hitherto done, so many of them being Dissenters. Mr Newdigate came in, and they both asked me if Alison would take a seat in Parliament if brought in free of expense at once. I said I thought it was quite incompatible with his situation as Sheriff. They said not to make the offer unless I thought there was a good chance of his accepting. I suppose, of course, it is out of the question; besides, it would be ruinous to Alison. If Aytoun were differently circumstanced, what a famous opportunity it would be for him. I am sure they would take him on our recommendation.

I called upon Lord John Manners also. He praised the article in the Magazine very much, as being beautifully written, temperate, and sound. I do not think he has quite made up his own mind how he is to vote. He made rather a sensible remark, that when all the statesmen of the two great parties gave up a question it might be taken as ended. He says, however, that if the party do make the fight out and out, they may carry it on for some years yet. The money, he says, is pouring in like shot now: he has reason to believe that the Duke of Portland has offered one hundred thousand pounds as his contribution.

My present notion for the Magazine is that we will be able to manage pretty well in this way—viz., to stand by the Corn Laws, but not to attack Peel on the ground first advanced in

the Magazine, and afterwards adopted by him in his speech, "the difficulty of managing a Reform House of Commons," which in reality I have no doubt has more to do with his conversion than the experience of the last three years.

I have had a great many conversations with Warren. He would maintain with me to the last that Peel was not going the whole, or anything like the whole, hog. Now, he is rather too Peelite. I shall see him this afternoon as I go home. If we ask him he will *promise*, at all events, to do a paper, but he would run us to the last moment. I am rather disposed to think we could manage better with Neaves or Aytoun in Edinburgh.

John Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

PATERNOSTER ROW, *January* 28, 1846.

I could not manage to get into the House last night; but I do not much regret it, as there were no demonstrations of feeling during the speech. The Conservative side listened in melancholy silence as on Thursday night. People are so staggered by the tremendous extent of the scheme, that it will be a day or two before any real opinions are expressed. I breakfasted with O'Brien this morning. The Agriculturists are, he says, determined to fight Peel; but, numerous as their forces are, they are in sad disorder, and they have not yet determined on what mode to give battle. They have a meeting at two to-day. O'Brien has a scheme for beating the Government on the Short Time Bill on Thursday. His principal difficulty is that Lord Ashley, who is vain to a degree, is possessed of a notion that Peel was mainly influenced in his change of measures by his (Lord A.'s) Dorsetshire declaration on the Corn Laws, and will not therefore be willing to damage Peel. O'Brien is very confident that a Government under Sir Robert Peel will not last long; that even his immediate supporters are disheartened; and as for the bull-headed Wodehouse section of the Agriculturists, they would much rather have Lord John Russell, even after Peel may have got his measure through. In reply to a remark of mine, as to the chance of a successful resistance to Peel's

measure, he said he would tell me, as I consulted him as a friend, that nobody was more doubtful than he was. This of course was strictly between ourselves. With regard to the formation of a Richmond Administration, he thought it was just possible if the Lords stood firm, which they at present profess they will do; but their doing so doubtless must depend on the numbers of the division in the House of Commons, which again is at present quite uncertain. As to the material of a Protectionist Ministry, he speaks very sensibly, and says, what every one knows, that they are sadly in want of men; that Peel has always kept back every man who showed any signs of independence, and they have no official education whatever: moreover, the bulk, as he said, were dreadfully thick-headed.

I do not in any way commit the Magazine in thus talking with O'Brien, as I was quite frank with him (as he was with me) that my object in consulting him was to see what chance there was for the old party.

There are no further points of John's political experience at this period to record here, and we come back to the familiar affairs of the Magazine, to the discussion of articles, and the "upmaking" of next month's number, and how John suddenly remembers at night in his bed that this is the "Index month" (on the 20th!), and finds in the morning that the functionary intrusted with that duty has forgotten it too; "but he has been working like a Tiger ever since, and it is all right." John only hopes that the same recollection has not come to Robert in the train, as he careers through the dark to London on the same winter night. It is Robert now who takes up the tale, and we find him at once plunged into schemes, first of all for the production of a great architectural work, the estimates for which, enclosed with the letter, take away the reader's breath. In this private

document, intended for no eyes but that of the partner-brother, we read with amazement that the expenses of the book, largely and splendidly illustrated, would come to £10,450 — but that, nevertheless, there was little hesitation about accepting the work.

LONDON, 18*th Nov.* 1845.

I have been going over Billings' scheme, and am upon the whole satisfied with it, and think the risk of loss small compared to the prospect of profit which it shows. I enclose the estimate, which you will not very well understand without my explanations. And even with them you will be at a loss.

The position we are to be in with Billings is that of partners, he undertaking to supply us with the drawings and engraving of each plate—say for £25—and the letterpress. The cost of the printing, with the writing, is not to exceed six pounds. You will understand that Billings is not to be paid for his drawings until the book pays. The charges he makes are to cover his outlay, and in the event of the book not paying its expenses he will be our debtor for half the amount paid beyond the receipts from the sales; or *vice versâ* if, when the book is finished, the charges he is entitled to make should exceed them, we are to pay him the difference. In fact, take it in this way —suppose Burn was our partner instead of Billings, we would make up our statement at the end of the year, and charge all monies paid to Billings. The papermaker, printer, &c., are set against that: the sales and the balance either way would be divided, be it profit or loss.

We are in a better position than is usual with us when we divide profits with an author, as his risk is as great as ours; and if the book does not take, we can stop when a volume is completed. This Billings understands, and says that (in that case) it would be lost time for him to go on. He tells me that Anderson is so satisfied with the Durham that he is ready to begin with Northumberland next, and gradually extend to Scotland.

You will perceive from what I have said that the book is different from what he originally contemplated, and it is only

on fully considering the subject in all its bearings that I have brought myself to it. The letterpress will be confined to simple description, and for that Billings is best suited, as when he makes the drawings he takes his notes, which have to be put into shape, and in this way he collects information as he goes along. Burn assures me most positively that he is well qualified for this, and can give the styles and dates of the architecture so as to satisfy the profession; and with the public the pictures are the principal object of attraction.

It will be, I am sure, January 1847 before the publication could be begun, and I think we may take the risk of agreeing to publish; and should anything occur to make us wish to give it up, we should have no difficulty in getting out of it at a trifling loss. I hope you will be able to make out the calculations, and I wish Simpson and you would make out an estimate of the cost of each number in our usual way. . . . Our returns would be so quick that the outlay would never be considerable, and we must always keep in view that in the event of our finding it more expedient we could raise the price of the numbers, or double their size, which would reduce the expense of publishing very much. The result of my cogitations is this, that we should make the attempt. In fact, there is all the usual gamble in the speculation. If we do not take it up, Burn is to give Billings the loan of £500, which is all he asks, and he starts for Scotland, collects his materials, and publishes on his own account. You would like the fellow if you saw him. Phillips has been here, and on talking to him about Billings I find he has a very high opinion of his abilities, but thinks him a savage. He is certainly a rum customer.

John from Edinburgh, where he was in charge, replied acquiescing in this great venture. It is curious and pleasant to see how completely on a level with his elder brother, who had so much more experience than he, our young correspondent of Pall Mall—he was now twenty-seven—had become. His sojourn in London had matured and developed his natural forces, and made him, as Robert evidently thought, the most

trustworthy of counsellors. "My fancy for having Burn as a partner in the 'Scottish Antiquities,'" he says, "is less for the saving in the money risk than for the immensely stronger hold it gives us over Billings; as in the event of his growing rusty and kicking up his heels when we were once fully embarked, it is a great thing to have some one in London who would be a complete check upon him." He proceeds to comfort Robert, who reports that he had seen Mr Warren in London, and had been talked into utter despondency about the new and cheap edition of Alison in many volumes which had been decided upon:—

Nov. 24.

I have frequently suffered as from a nightmare under the way that Warren sometimes argues one into a gloomy view of any speculation or difficulty. He is a most excellent and friendly adviser; but in this case he would, I doubt not, go a great deal too far, from not knowing the selling powers of the great book. There is no doubt that 20 volumes is a staggerer, and I had a strong fancy to make it 18 if it had been practicable. Nevertheless, I am exceedingly confident, and trust we shall have occasion to be more so by the middle of January.

I have agreed to undertake a little publication with which, I think, you will be well pleased. A sister of George Wedderburn's draws most admirably. Constable (printer) called with a dozen drawings she had made from two fairy tales, "Fortunio" and "The White Cat." They are most beautiful things, and every one I have shown them to is quite delighted. She lithographs them herself, so that our only expense will be the printing and paper, which we calculate will be about £26 for an impression of 250 copies. It will be a quarto, to sell at 10s. 6d. or 15s., the profits to be divided. She will be the very person for Neaves' little book. I showed the drawings to him, and he was pleased beyond measure, as also the Professor, who had often heard of her extraordinary abilities. Altogether she is, I think, a very valuable young woman, and may turn out something very feasible.

Lockhart left this for London yesterday. I hope he will turn out something for next month. He did not dine with the Professor, but went down and sat with him in Gloucester Place for some time. The Professor caricatures his manner inimitably, but altogether he seems better pleased, and this week has been full of anxiety. Both yesterday and to-day he was here a long time, joking and talking in his very best style. I thought Delta would have gone into convulsions at an imitation he gave.

Robert had his mind full of many plans with regard especially to those great undertakings concerning which, and how to make the best of them, he was so constantly occupied; and the many editions of Alison's History, and particularly the new one in twenty volumes which Warren had shaken his head over, were the object of his continued solicitude. It seems, indeed, as if the freedom of action which he now possessed, unrestrained by the graver influence of his elder brother, had awakened in him a spirit of invention and adventure which made itself evident in many new speculations. "An idea struck me last night which I have been cogitating ever since," he says.

3rd Dec. 1846.

One hundred portraits of distinguished characters illustrating Alison's 'History of Europe,' to be published in twenty numbers; each number to contain five portraits and ten pages of short memoirs, editions in 8vo and crown to range with the book. My rough estimate is that the engravings, 20 gs. each, the drawing, 10 gs., extras for editing, &c., at the rate of ten gs. each plate, making a total of 4000 guineas. The paper, printing, and setting up of 1000 copies would be under 400 gs. The deuce is in it if we could not sell 3000 at 5s. a number, which would yield three pounds a book, or £9000.

This with the Atlas would so fortify the book that it would be impregnable to the attacks of all other histories of Europe in the period.

It must not be done in a hurry, but I intend to speak to Hardman about it, as he would do well for the editing, and I think his father has considerable knowledge of portraits, and would put us in the way of getting information about them. Indeed I think young Hardman would take the general superintendence, as he is a good man of business, and it would be something to put in his way.

John was not very favourable to this idea. He begs his brother not to hurry home, "as so many thoughts occur to you while on the spot and seeing how things are going," but adds:—

I am rather doubtful about the scheme for an Alison portrait-gallery. There are so many portraits about in various forms, and cheap, of all the leading characters. It is well worth consideration, however. It has occurred to me more than once that a small medallion portrait for each volume would be a good thing, if we could afford more expense upon the books.

I write you this upon Alexander's birthday, which brings many sad, sad thoughts to mind. You will receive it upon my birthday, and Tom and you will probably be dining somewhere together, in which case I shall expect a bumper of claret if you are alone. It is always a favourite time with me for making good resolutions. I hope I may be able to keep some of them.

Another idea of Robert's, adding considerably to the capabilities of the house, and its labours, was just at this moment coming into practical operation. For some time back the establishment of a printing-office of their own had been much in their minds, and many calculations and consultations passed between them on the subject. It was now fully established, and its first operations were upon the number of the Magazine which was to begin the new year, that for January 1847. "I might have a proof to send you

to-night as the first-fruits of the office," John says, "but should like to go over it and see that it is a very clear one before despatching it." It was the most practical of proofs of Robert's energetic and speculative spirit, and soon formed an important part of the establishment in Edinburgh.

The brother Tom, who occupied the thoughts of the elders of the family so anxiously after their father's death, had returned home some years before, and was at this period in London, much regretting the change of the London office from Pall Mall, with the consequent withdrawal of John to Edinburgh. His name reminds us of the other members of the family, especially those still banished in India; and I may quote here a letter of the youngest of all, the cheerful and still boyish Archie, of whose progress the elder soldier William had written much, but whose personal appearances in the correspondence of the family are but few. It is evident, however, that it was from no want of affection that this was the case, as the following will show:—

Archibald Blackwood to his Brother Thomas.

MEERUT, 25*th June* 1845.

I received your letter of 6th May with its enclosures on the 21st inst., and was very much gratified by seeing the high estimation in which Alexander was held by so many illustrious men. Johnnie's going down to Edinburgh will be a great loss to you, as I fancy you and he passed many a cosy evening in Pall Mall together, when you gave him, I hope, some idea of the state and grandeur of us luxurious Potentates. By Jove! if he saw me now, sweating at every pore, he would thank his stars that the "shady side of Pall Mall" was his fate. You know the muggy abominable feeling just before the rains set in. I think I hear a few drops of rain; yes, here it comes, a regular plump: so I'll

put on my *tungeers* and have a souse in it. Cool and comfortable in the verandah, I now recommence my epistle. What a luxury the first fall of rain is! Should it keep cloudy and not rain, I shall take a ride after breakfast and try and fancy myself at Brunstane or Woodville. Somehow or other, after rain I always think of our country house and how happy we used to be. Do you recollect at Carfin the frantic way in which we used to rush from the house to the stable, bone some peas and beans, and after successfully making ourselves dirty, rush back to the house, to the great dismay of Auntie? I do not know whether it is from my predilection for sweet things, but I have the most vivid recollection of the pantry at Carfin. Do you remember the tartlets that used to be stowed there, nice plump little fellows with lots of jam in them? I fancy they must have something to do with my vivid recollection. Joking apart, however, this rain always does bring you all to my mind as I fancy you out at Woodville. Thinking of Brunstane reminds me of the happy day when dear Alexander and Johnnie returned, and the glorious drive we had out there. How little did any of us think then that he was so soon to be taken from us! I recollect his appearance that day so well. I was sitting on the box, he was so happy and laughing and joking with me, and so pleased to be once more among those he so dearly loved. We can never forget him. How well I recollect him the morning our dear father died, when he came up to waken Johnnie and me. But it is painful for me thus to write and for you to read; his place can never be supplied to us. It will be five years on the 28th since I landed in Calcutta, and a long time it appears; five more and, please God, I will be on the way to see you all: nothing on earth will induce me to delay a single hour, no, not even the best appointment in the country. What a happy day it will be for me! I often fancy myself entering the dining-room some Sunday after dinner, when you are drinking our healths: it is a long time yet, however, and Patience is very necessary.

The elder brother William had been in India fifteen years longer than Archie, and many a hope of coming in suddenly upon the well-beloved family in all their

familiar ways had passed through his mind; but he had married and taken upon himself all the responsibilities of that step in life, and it had been impossible to gratify that desire. Now, however, after twenty years' service, he began with hesitation to contemplate the idea. He had now the additional attraction of two children "at home." But, on the other hand, he had after long waiting secured a comfortable appointment in a healthy station, and doubts as to the expediency of risking that great advantage were heavy in his mind:—

William Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

CHIRRAHPOONGIE, 23*rd July* 1846.

I have thought and talked a great deal with Emma about going home, and though I cannot say that I have brought myself to give up the idea yet, still I am decided that I should be wrong to leave this place. It appears to me very hard that we can't go home for a twelvemonth without destroying all our prospects here and take our chance of what may turn up when I return. It is like in some degree being obliged to make a fresh start in life; but it is the rule of the service, and one not likely to be altered, I fear, except in cases of sick furlough when officers may be allowed to go without losing their appointments, as they are now to the Cape for a couple of years when sick. Some alteration will perhaps be made in the furlough rules—it certainly ought, now that England is brought nearer to Calcutta than the Cape by the steamers. If I could get away in any way for a year without being put off this station, I would not grudge the expense of the trip; but everybody says it would be wrong to give up this appointment, where I can have my family always in such a climate. . . .

I often think how happy the boys must be at Woodville, and call to mind our own holidays at Carfin and Ravelrig, and at Patrickholm too—even tho' I used not to be able to get my shoes cleaned there! They were happy days. Old Patrickholm's happy face, and wink and nudge to us while

poor Jess used to be viciously scolding at our being too late for dinner, or some other equally heinous offence, come as distinctly before me as tho' it had occurred but a few days ago. He seldom failed to make a diversion in our favour and draw her wrath down upon himself.

The following letter shows the plans for the future, which were already embracing the happy little second generation, then making the echoes ring with sport and pastime through all the leafy ways of Woodville, and little thinking of what was to come, while their elders planned out their future career. How closely the plan was followed which was formed at so early a period, and how the little boy whom it was so amusing to think of as a publisher came in his time to be the sole prop of the house, is a pathetic yet also a pleasing thought :—

30th Oct. 1846.

I have entertained the hope for a long time that you would think of having one of the boys made a publisher, and both Emma and myself were equally pleased to see you propose it, though we thought them both so young yet that your proposing it so early has been in some measure an agreeable surprise to us. We are both inclined to think that George will be the best adapted for your profession, but I should like to hear what you at home think; for both Willy and he were so young when they left us, and I was so little with them the last twelve months they were in this country, that your opinion on the subject will be far the best. Willy, as being the elder and called after our dear father, if in other respects equal to George for the business, I should prefer. It will be better to say nothing to either just now. I suppose a cadetship is a very good provision if it is to be got, and I shall have great cause to be thankful in seeing any of them so provided for. Archy Hastie, as you say, may be inclined to give us a lift in this way. I don't know that until a boy gets at least 12 or 13 years of age any difference need be made

in his education for the army. I look upon all study of the native languages at home as time thrown away: they are so different in structure and the sounds of the words to European languages, that little can be done in them, while the time taken up with them might be much more profitably employed in acquiring a good knowledge of mathematics, military drilling, and of everything which cannot readily be acquired in this country, and will be of great service. I never thought of applying so early for a cadetship, and indeed there is no one to whom I could apply at present on the subject except yourself (unless to Hastie); but if you can ask one for me for either of the two at home, it will certainly be a satisfaction to know that it is secured, though there is still plenty of time.

In the spring of 1847 we find Robert again in London with a new and very important plan in his mind, no less than that of establishing a weekly paper in London—a plan which evidently had been growing since the time when the 'Berwick Warder' fell into his hands. I suspect that Alexander must have been against these projects, for, with the exception of one reference in the letter of one of the literary correspondents of the house to the possibility of a newspaper in Edinburgh, nothing of the kind had been hinted at during his lifetime. But I suppose Edinburgh had been found unpropitious to a Tory newspaper. It is curious that, producing as it did, and taking pride in, the most high Conservative of all periodicals in 'Maga,' Edinburgh has always rejected a newspaper of the same principles. The lingering extinction of the 'Courant,' the highly respectable but never popular Tory paper, which was the first historically of Scottish prints, has occurred only in our own day. I think I am right in saying that it has been impossible to establish any other journal of the

same unmixed sentiments. The Tory party in the gay metropolis of the North was strong enough to uphold the Magazine by a host of stalwart and determined shoulders, but not to procure the extended sale necessary for the success of a paper. It had been accordingly to London that the speculative brother of the Edinburgh house had turned his eyes, and he travelled thither on this occasion with his pockets full of estimates and calculations, drawn up, one cannot but feel, with amazing simplicity, and a confidence which must have been unwarrantable even in these less expensive days. Hardman, the handiest of men of letters, was undeniably the best man for the editorship; and there would be no want of contributors, when there were already so many attached to the greater organ. Therefore the planner was full of exhilarating excitement and hope.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

LONDON, 15*th February* 1847.

Yesterday and to-day I have had a great deal of talk with Hardman, and find all right. The result is that we estimate the payment of contributors at 15 gs., which is, I think, enough, and 5 gs. a-week for editor, which he is perfectly satisfied with. I made up while he was here an estimate, a copy of which I enclose. I am very anxious to have your views about issuing only a stamped edition. The facilities of circulation are very great, and I do not think the extra ½d. would affect the town sale much, while in the country it would be an immense boon, and the increase of sale there would, I think, compensate for the loss arising from the reduction of price. Then it is a novel feature in a literary paper: this is of consequence, and besides frees us from the Stamp Office regulations.

It seems necessary to explain that in these days papers were taxed with a stamp, which necessitated

inquisitions very troublesome to the printers, &c., but secured the passage of the paper through the post, which it is to be presumed is what is meant above by the "immense boon" of the stamped edition for country use. I can remember the great jubilation over the repeal of this Stamp Act, and the liberation of the Press from the many vexatious restrictions involved, which perhaps, according to this, was not so unmingled an advantage as in those days it was made to appear. Robert's letters discuss closely the comparative merits of the stamped and non-stamped editions, with a minuteness which it is a little difficult to follow; but his thoughts and his time were alike fully occupied with his plan. "I am much taken up with Hardman," he writes; "he and Phillips dined with me yesterday, the latter to all appearance the same as ever. We are beginning to see our way more clearly, and I think the whole will be arranged satisfactorily."

17th February.

I saw Mr Lockhart for a few minutes [he adds parenthetically, taking breath for a moment]. He was curious to know who was to be the Editor of the ['Edinburgh] Review.' I said I thought Empson, but to-day I was in Longman's, and Tom and his brother being particularly engaged, old Brown spoke of Napier as a great loss to them, and in the course of conversation mentioned that Empson's engagements would not permit him to undertake the editorship; that Lord Jeffrey had recommended some one in Edinburgh, but they did not fancy him. Who can this be? Cosmo, or Mrs Cosmo?

18th Feb.

Hardman has just been here, and seems as confident as a man can be in the success of the paper. We go down to Dickinson's on Saturday, when we shall finally decide to go on or not. If we do not, I think Hardman will try something of

the kind on his own account, and I see many advantages we may derive from keeping our connection with him, though I think at first it may take him a good deal off the Magazine.

"I am very much of your mind about the weekly," he continues next day, obviously shaken in his confidence by the unfavourable opinion of John, and chilled by the approach of the moment of decision, "and would as soon see Hardman give it up; but his mind seems set upon it."

19th Feb.

We go to Dickinson's to-morrow. I have not had very much conversation with him, but I think he is against it. If he is so after seeing all the calculations we have made, then I should be off, and I think Hardman would be so also.

22nd Feb.

We had a long talk with Dickinson yesterday, and he is decidedly opposed to the scheme, and put it in such a light that I think Hardman himself is frightened for it. I am to dine with him and his father upon Wednesday, when a stop will be put to the whole.

This sudden conclusion to a cherished idea on the mere word of "Dickinson" is curious; but the old papermaker had been all along a steady friend to the Blackwoods, whose loyalty to their connections in business and social life, especially to those which descended to them from their father, was great. Besides, this gentleman was noted both for experience and sagacity, and his knowledge of the Trade was boundless. Robert turns abruptly to "the machines" and the printing-office, which was in all the novelty of a new diversion, besides being a matter of so much importance in their lives. It now afforded them an opportunity of drawing the family bonds closer, and

calling back to their aid the brother who had been so long absent, and who, after twenty long years of service in India, was now longing for at least a glimpse of home. Captain Blackwood, as we have seen, had been weighing the circumstances with much anxiety and care as to whether he could venture to give himself this great pleasure and advantage. The thing above all others which detained him was the danger of losing the appointment which he held in a cool and healthy station, where his wife and children had preserved their health, and the little ones were growing up vigorous and strong. If he could hope after the end of a year's furlough to recover this position, he would at once make up his mind to return; but, as he explained, it was the rule of the service that such advantages were forfeited, and that an officer on his return had, as it were, to begin life anew. The brothers seem to have met this difficulty promptly by an invitation to return to Edinburgh permanently, and to settle down at home, taking a portion of the work of the business upon his shoulders. The suppressed excitement and eagerness with which this proposal was received,—the strong desire to accept, yet the struggle of diffidence and prudence, doubt of his own power to fulfil the duties offered, and alarm in that case lest his advantages in India should be forfeited in vain,—rent his mind in two.

William Blackwood to his Brother Robert.

CHIRRAHPOONGIE, 10*th March* 1847.

Your letter of the 22nd December was only received along with Johnnie's of the 5th January on the 4th of this month. Your proposition that I should come home with the view of taking the management of the printing concern, if I thought on trial

it would suit me, has, you may be sure, given me, and Emma too, serious cause for reflection. My first feeling was surprise and doubt of my capability of managing such a concern satisfactorily, mingled with lively emotion at the kindness and affectionate interest for me which pervades your letter. I may say at once that I am disposed to go home and try the thing. The advantages of being settled at home with such a family as ours, with the means of a comfortable income which your proposition offers, are so very great that, as you say, the thing is worth the trial, and, as you know, I have long felt anxious to pay my dear mother and you all a visit. These reasons have each had almost equal weight with me, the latter being much strengthened by the anxiety shown by you and John for my going home in the proposal you have made. I must say that I feel great and serious doubt of my fitness for the post. This, however, I will have time enough at home to ascertain before finally deciding; but what has made the struggle, and still hangs on my mind, is the giving up this appointment, to which, or rather to Chirrahpoongie, Emma and myself have with good reason taken a strong liking. After some days' deliberation I mentioned the matter to Lister [his commanding officer] confidentially, and we had a good deal of talk about it. I said my doubt was exactly what I have just told you. He fully agreed with me as to the advantages of your proposition, and thought I might and ought to try it. I afterwards sent him your letter, and he wrote back all he could say was that if such a proposal had been made to him at my age, he would have jumped at it, and that with my habits he felt certain any concern I undertook must prosper. As he is not given to compliments, I confess I have felt somewhat more confident by his opinion after he had seen what you said on the subject. If the furlough regulation is altered, allowing a man to go for twelve or eighteen months without forfeiture of appointment, it will allow me to go quite easy in mind, for I think I would very soon see on the spot whether I was up to the work. You and John would be able to judge too, and I shall expect perfect frankness from you both. I make no doubt of my liking the thing if I am equal to it,—I mean, being really efficient and useful to you in the business; but if I know myself at all, I feel certain that if I proved incapable, from my previous

habits or any other cause, of really understanding what was going on in the office, and being able to give such a general superintendence as is necessary in a master without being dependent on the people under me, I should be most uncomfortable, and would never undertake the concern if I saw, or rather shall see, any likelihood of its proving so. That I have strong feeling on this point you will easily imagine, and that I have a sort of nervous dread lest I am allowing the flattering prospects your proposition holds out to overbalance the sense of the difficulties of such a new business to me, which still holds me somewhat undecided. Lister told me he would not retire for some years at any rate, and I doubt his ever going, so that there is not much chance of an opening here, and I told him so, as I thought his was as good a life as my own for the next 20 years. He thinks, however, that he has a disease of the heart, and may be carried off very suddenly, and so he has often told me.

It will be better to continue this correspondence until its close in the acceptance of the brotherly proposal:—

CHIRRAHPOONGIE, 22*nd May* 1847.

I received about a week since your letter of the 23rd March. My previous letters will have informed you of my intention to go home and see whether I cannot avail myself of your kind proposal for remaining there altogether. I hope the delay which I have in part been compelled to make on Emma's account and that of the children, and partly from my own desire to see what is the result of the furlough question, may not be the cause of any serious disappointment to you. . . . It will, I am sure, be far more agreeable to you, should I find I cannot manage the printing-office, to see me return to India without having lost my appointment or in any way injured my chance of advancement on the staff; and if I do remain for good at home, I think I will decide on doing so myself with greater pleasure and confidence when I feel that I am unbiassed in doing so by any uncertainty as to my prospects in India. The advantages, as far as I can judge in this country, are so obvious to me of

your offer, that it does not appear to me any prospects in India which can be open to me under the most favourable circumstances will induce me to reject it, but that, on the contrary, when I am once at home I shall be more in want of inducements to return to this country to enable me to decide justly as to my own fitness for the business. . . .

I am much gratified to hear the flourishing accounts you give of your business in general, and of the great sale of the new edition of Alison. It can rarely if ever, I fancy, have been equalled by a historical work of such magnitude. I am a great admirer of the book, whatever may be its faults or oversights; for a narrative that carries one along with unabating interest through such a vast series of events, and the generous spirit which enters into feelings of men of all nations and parties, and gives them credit accordingly, however entirely the writer may differ from their principles, make it a wonderful work, and liberal in the right sense of the word. I can understand well how gratifying the general prosperity and success of your books must be. I recollect well what interest our father took in all he published. If he had written them himself he could not have been more gratified at their success. I have often thought of it when recalling to mind his image and habits and feelings. I recollect well, one of the last days I was with him, our going into a circulating library in the Isle of Wight, and some lady coming in and asking for the 'Inheritance.' His countenance lightened up in a moment, and the sparkle of the eye with which he looked at Alexander and me are all as vividly before me as though the event had happened but yesterday. The eagerness with which he addressed the Isle of Wight bookseller regarding the merits of the book, and the latter's matter-of-fact appearance and indifference to such subjects as being quite beyond his business, was a striking contrast.

We have all here been very well, and had a most unusually fine season. Scarce any rain, and nothing to prevent our being out all day. It has been rather a subject of distress, however, to Bobby and Charlie, as there has been nothing to prevent their going to school daily. Master Charlie said to me the other morning as he was starting, he wished it would rain, adding, after a slight pause, that it made the trees grow! They

are both getting on tolerably well. Charlie is very quick, but very idle, and has a wonderful knack of going to sleep when at his lessons. Bobby is not so quick, but has a very tenacious memory—indeed they all appear good in that respect. Sandy is a very amusing little chap, and the most unceasing chatterer of them all. He will go on for hours talking incessantly to his mother when the others are at school. . . . We are delighted with the account you give of Smith. A marriage so pleasing to all parties interested in the welfare of the pair can hardly fail to prove a happy and prosperous one. Emma wrote to her, I think, last mail.

28th July 1847.

I have been looking anxiously the last two mails for a letter from you, and was very sorry to hear by John's letter of 5th June that you had been so poorly. I shall not feel comfortable till I hear of your being better, which I trust will be from yourself by next mail. . . . He (John) tells me you particularly requested him to tell me not to quit my appointment without hearing further from you. My former letter will have explained my reasons for having hesitated about doing so. I only wait to hear from you to fix the time when we shall leave now. There is no chance, I fancy, now of the furlough rules being altered this season, and I will not wait beyond January or December unless I hear from you recommending me to do so. . . .

I look with the most lively feelings to our meeting again. It is true that there will be some painful recollections mixed with the pleasure, and I have a fear at times of the great change which the long separation from you all, and the different life I have had, must in some measure make in our past feelings and associations.

Off Burisal, 15*th November* '47, 6 a.m.

Our passage is taken in the steamer which sails on 8th Dec., and a good European woman has been engaged for Emma and the baby, so that we shall be all ready to be off a few days after we arrive at Calcutta.

The recall of Captain Blackwood was probably not altogether caused by the additional work given by

the printing-office, though that was considerable, and a very good excuse to silence the doubts of so judicious and affectionate a helper in the many delicate affairs of the business. Indications already begin to appear that the excessive work and anxiety to which the two elder brothers had been subjected in their youth were beginning to tell upon the second, as they had already sapped the life of the first. In the end of this year Robert urges John's return from London in a tone of unconscious pathos. "If you have nothing particular in view," he says, "I think you may as well come home in the end of the week."

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

EDINBURGH, 18*th May* 1847.

I am not well, caused in a great measure by the state of the weather and the confusion we are in at home with the moving, which has completely put me out of sorts. When I am left so much to myself I sit brooding over things and take despondent views. I am never well in spring, as you know, and this one seems peculiarly ungenial to me.

A few more notes, not without interest, may come in here. The scraps of information about Lockhart and his affairs, which were in many cases the affairs of the Scott family—now, alas! disappeared from the earth, the only heir being Lockhart's young son Walter—have always an interest. "Lockhart has gone to-day," says Robert, reporting from Edinburgh to his brother.

He has sold the half interests in the copyrights [Scott's]. The sum which Cadell pays is, I think, £26,000. This was principally a debt due by Sir Walter's heirs to himself. Lockhart said that since 1832, including the above sum, £44,000 had been paid. He could not recollect the exact amount drawn

from the edition before that, but this last included the Life. Lockhart was mistaken about the succession to Abbotsford. It does go to Walter [Lockhart], and in a year or two it will yield him something considerable after paying Lady Scott's jointure. So he has made us put all the newspapers on the wrong scent.

The following, which is without date, probably ought to have come in a little earlier, but this is not of any importance :—

George Moir returned to-day. I think he will do an article on a book by an Oxford undergraduate about Turner. The author's name, I think, is Ruskin. Croly spoke to me about him. George Moir thinks he would be a great acquisition to the Magazine, so you had better make inquiries about him. There was a review of his first volume, I think, by Eagles, but I would not mind that, as Moir's view of the book is very different.

Two letters follow concerning Warren's next work, the very serious and tragic novel called 'Now and Then' :—

11*th Nov.* 1847.

I mentioned to you yesterday that Warren was meditating something. To-day I went down and found that he had actually made progress with a tale. It is intended for publication at Christmas in one volume, the title to be 'Now and Then.' He read to me portions, and told me the whole plot and construction, and I do not hesitate to say it struck me as being beyond compare the very best thing I ever heard. You know Warren's way, but I assure you I felt nothing of that on this occasion. It is a wonderful production.

The idea of a Christmas book had been suggested to him by Bradbury, he says, and the wonderful profits that were to be made. After some fencing he told me that his expectation was to make £600 or £700. I considered for a moment, and guessing his matter in the way he proposes would be equal to ten Magazine sheets, I said to him : "Now, Warren, this is not

to go beyond ourselves. If you like to have it published in the Magazine, we will give you 500 gs. down, and other five hundred when complete." He was greatly pleased, and said a great many things about how grateful he felt; but the idea of the book is strong in his head, and he said he would rather we should publish it by itself. This, I said, we would have the greatest pleasure in doing, and there the matter stands at present. My own idea is that his materials will so extend upon him that he will not have the whole ready to be put into the hands of the printers so as to be out before Christmas; so it may yet come to the Magazine.

13th November.

I have been thinking a great deal about Warren's book, and I have now got rid of the idea that it was following in the wake of Dickens. It must be a guinea book, in royal post 8vo, handsomely bound.

I went down to Warren this morning with my scheme. He was startled, but ended by leaving the matter entirely in my hands. It will be a frightful squeeze to get it ready, but before I leave on Wednesday I shall have everything in a fair train.

I am a good deal excited about this, but my health is greatly improved. I had a long satisfactory consultation with Dr Watson, the first physician in London, on Wednesday, and he gave me a prescription, which I have been taking, and it has, I fancy, done me good. I am to see him again.

It is quite evident to me now that Warren will drop the law, and take to literature, which I am now satisfied is the best thing.

This prophecy, however, did not come true. Warren had still his apotheosis before him of parliamentary elevation, and of the final appointment, a legal one, that of Master in Lunacy, which placed him above the ordinary necessities of labour with the pen,—an appointment which, no doubt, he owed entirely to his literary reputation, and more especially to his political work in the pages of the Magazine; so that, as a

matter of fact, instead of giving himself up to literature, he from this time wrote little.

A writer of greater and more permanent fame (though also one more great among his contemporaries than to posterity) about this time began his connection with the Magazine, and, I think, did by far the best work of his life in its service. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, as he was now called, had, I presume, grown tired of the facile triumphs of his romantic period, and the temptations to try a new anonymous venture are always great, and its success specially gratifying to a writer. As early as June '47 he had written to the Blackwoods on the subject of his new book, which he had "no objection" to allow them to see. "Indeed," he says, "as reputation is much more valuable to me than money, I should be glad of an experienced eye as to its probable success." In March 1848 he sent a portion of the manuscript, with the explanation that if any of the opinions in the earlier part of the tale which were given forth by Uncle Jack and other interlocutors were "contrary to those for which your Magazine is renowned," he would reconsider them, though, having carefully gone over these passages, he saw nothing likely "to offend your political readers." "I hope, however," he adds, "there is nothing to alarm the Blackwoodian susceptibilities. Indeed the principal and the best character in the book, Uncle Roland, may be considered, like most old soldiers, a Tory of the high old chivalric school." The title, which he submits with some doubt, as "perhaps not sufficiently alluring," 'The Caxtons, a Family Picture,' was, as the reader knows, retained; and it is curious to find in this much-applauded and popular novelist, the darling at

once of drawing-rooms and of seamstresses, so much fine humility as leads him to ask whether his editors would prefer the remainder of the book to adhere to the style and character of the three earlier numbers, which are chiefly taken up with conversations on the Shandeian model, or to run somewhat more into the general incidents of a novel. I have not the Blackwood reply, but no doubt it must have leant a little towards the higher development, though "I fancy that the merit and originality of the work consists in the former," the author says modestly, and I think most readers will agree with him. We find him, however, in a subsequent letter adopting, with a docility that could not have been expected, a suggestion, probably from John Blackwood, of an alteration "to prevent political misconstruction." "I have made a correction which will, I hope, serve the purpose," he says. Again he receives with pleasure the suggestion that three volumes would be better than two, thus running to eighteen numbers in the Magazine,—an unusual length, and fully showing how great the confidence of the publisher was in the merits of the book. The price asked by the author for this was £25 per sheet in the Magazine issue, and £1000 when completed. "I must own that the Magazine does not promise the same profits as any other mode of publication," he adds. But the work was intended as a new beginning, and the Blackwood faculty for keeping up an incognito was very strong. "I think," says Sir Edward, "the excitement of curiosity a great object; and the after-confession of the authorship adds a double attraction if the work made any sensation." "I do not profess to be one of those authors who reject advice," he con-

tinues. On the other hand, nothing could be more favourable than his opinion of the Magazine itself. He begins by saying that he had a difficulty—a difficulty not shared by contributors in general—concerning "the celebrity as a political organ" of the periodical in which his novel was about to appear: "Though I daresay I agree with you much more than might be supposed, still I do not belong to your party," he says; but he congratulates himself that, independently of the monthly circulation, readers of every taste can refer to the collected pages of the Magazine with delight as a standard collection, "which can be said of no other Magazine." A set of the volumes of 'Maga' had recently been sent to him, so that he was in a position to speak on this subject. And he adds, "There is a pyramidal massiveness about it which strikes me much." "I saw Sir Edward yesterday," writes Robert from London.

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

He is in great force, and looking much better than when I last saw him. He asked me down to Hertfordshire. I happened to mention Phillips' name, and he spoke, evidently with some bitterness, about the article in the 'Times,' which he thought was unfair and unkind. I am sorry for this, as I had some thoughts of asking Sir Edward to the dinner I propose to give at Blackwall,

which included a number of contributors—Alison, Warren, Phillips, &c. The London battalion of the Blackwood forces had now become a large one, emulating if not exceeding the faithful Scots contingent in its native home.

All went very well with the Magazine in these prosperous years. And here is a glimpse of a veteran

novelist, an old friend, who was the correspondent of the elder Mr Blackwood, and still evidently carried on his prodigious stream of production unbroken :—

I wrote to G. P. R. James, asking him to meet Mr Jay. He writes in reply a very kind note asking Jay down to his house in the country to-morrow, and apologises for inviting him on that day, as he is under an engagement to finish a book on the 22nd of this month, and he finds that to do 29 pages a-day on an average, with his ordinary correspondence, fully occupies the other six.

We now come in sight also of another new figure which was destined to take a great part in the Magazine. "I forgot to tell you that Aytoun was certainly to do a review of the 'Lays of the Deer-Forest' for next month," writes Robert. "Aytoun has also a Ballad nearly finished." He had begun to contribute some time before, and was every day becoming more important to the Magazine, to which his brilliant and amusing paper on the "Glen-mutchkin Railway," published at the very height of the railway mania, had given one of those old thrilling sensations of triumph and success familiar to her younger days. But the warm friendship which subsisted between Aytoun and John Blackwood brings him in more properly at a later period.

There were still, however, sensations awaiting the Magazine even from her oldest supporters, which still moved the Editors almost more than the promise of new contributors. Wilson had done very little for many years. He had been prostrated by the death of his wife, and had fallen into much slothfulness in respect to literature, though he still occasionally blazed forth from his semi-obscurity in an eloquent speech, and was gaining a distinct reputation for

efforts of this kind. Dickinson, for instance, the wise old man who was so potent a counsellor, resolved upon a journey to Edinburgh on hearing of a meeting at which Wilson was to speak, expressly to hear him, not grudging either time or trouble; and Lockhart and other friends racked their brains for excuses to draw him up to London in order that he might electrify the Literary Fund or some other metropolitan symposium, dull and decorous, with his fervid eloquence—but in vain. And it was now very seldom that he wrote anything for the Magazine. A sheet was often left for him in the "upmaking" till the last possible moment, in the hope of an article; but it was very rarely that any article came. In these circumstances it may easily be supposed that the following sudden and unexpected arrival was as exciting as it was agreeable:—

Robert Blackwood to his Brother John.

EDINBURGH, 16*th May* 1849.

You would have been as much surprised as I was at receiving the enclosed together with a packet of MSS. It is, as he says, a sort of 'Noctes,' and is entitled "Christopher under Canvas. *Scene*—Loch Awe. North, Butler, Servant, &c."

I had much difficulty in making out his manuscript, but it strikes me as very good, and I am certain it will turn out so. So far as I can see, this number, though it will contain few articles, will turn out a good one.

I quote the following as a curious example of the pertinacity of one subject, the designs of Russia, in politics then as now:—

I have got the first part of Sir John's paper, and it seems very good. The intervention of Russia in German politics is sure to bring on a general war, as Germans of all shades of opinion would thus unite and Austria would be broken up.

This is the sort of view he takes, and is in accordance with the general feelings of all classes in this country, that however much some may admire the Austrians, if they are not able to maintain order for themselves but require Russian assistance there must be something wrong.

What a changed world since these words were written, and yet what a continuous perception and jealous consciousness of one Power, always ready and on the watch, always pushing forward its influence! The vicissitude of things is a favourite subject of all the philosophies serious and silly; and the Continent has seen change enough to turn any observer's head. But amid all this, the mystic power of that one savage unity of an empire, modified by none of the circumstances of civilisations, inhumanly consistent, permanent, unchanging, has never failed. Sir John was Sir John M'Neill, brother of Lord Colonsay, one of the oracles of the East, and of foreign politics, in his day.

A little further on we find the recurrence of one of those difficulties with Mr Warren which run through so many years. The enthusiasm with which his publishers received his greater efforts, and the immense praise which Robert Blackwood had lately given to 'Now and Then,' the last of these, did not alter the fact that his occasional contributions in the form of political articles were not always found suitable to 'Maga' or pleasing to her conductors. Their great friendship for the man, and his highly emotional nature, which made a temporary rebuff of this kind appear to him as a crushing calamity, hampered them very much in their dealings with him; but still it was impossible to disguise that some of his pro-

ductions were not to the taste of his friends, affectionate and highly appreciative as they were. "I fully enter into all you say," writes Robert, "about Warren being annoyed."

There is no man breathing whose feelings I should go a further way to consult; but whatever may be the merits of his paper—and of that I am very doubtful—the number is a better one without it, and whatever he may say or think when he first hears that it is not inserted, he will on consideration see the propriety of making some allowance for the difficulties in which we are placed in setting up a number; and above all he, or no one, must be allowed to suppose that the Magazine depends upon his contribution. I will write to him to-morrow saying generally that the paper on Canada, and the length the Professor has turned out, prevented me using it; at the same time I will tell him generally that I do not think the paper well suited for the Magazine.

There is something ruefully amusing to a writer in these glimpses behind the scenes, and the determination of the Editor that neither the most important of their contributors nor any man should be allowed to suppose that the Magazine depends on his contribution! All of us have received these diplomatic effusions, showing how difficult it is to find a place, how urgent other papers are, and finally, that we are ourselves by no means so indispensable as perhaps we had supposed!

"The Professor was here to-day," Robert adds, "and seems to be in great delight with himself, and says he is to go on with the series, which he is trying to get a name for; 'Dies' instead of 'Noctes' is his idea, and he has gone to see Neaves about it." There were many fine things, we remember, in "Christopher under Canvas,"—"Dies Boreales," if we recollect rightly; much beautiful description, and some

criticisms of a penetrating kind: but perhaps the fashion of that fantastic but effective style of composition was over, though Lockhart too clung to it, as we have seen, with a half-pathetic tenderness for the methods of their youth.

Captain Blackwood and his family arrived from India in January 1848. He was in a way "Another for Hector!" a fourth labourer on the perennial Magazine, which consumed so many energies. John had taken Alexander's place when he fell. Unconsciously to them all as yet, William had come to fill that of Robert, whose health had already begun to cause anxieties, though the end was not yet. The same year saw another important event for the family in the marriage of Janet, the youngest daughter and child, which seems to have been settled during one of Robert's absences in England. "I am much amused," he writes, "at my mother's foresight about Janet's business. I am certain her first remark to Jem and you would be, "God preserve me! were both of you blind?" The marriage took place in 1847, the bridegroom being Archibald Smith, of a well-known West Country family, then or after Sheriff-Substitute of Glasgow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NEW BLACKWOOD BAND.

MAJOR BLACKWOOD RETURNS FROM INDIA AND ENTERS THE BUSINESS—MRS OLIPHANT'S FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO 'MAGA'—BULWER LYTTON—THE CAXTON SERIES—SIR EDWARD HAMLEY—GEORGE HENRY LEWES—GEORGE ELIOT: MR LEWES'S MYSTERIOUS FRIEND—THE SECRET REVEALED—AYTOUN—SIR THEODORE MARTIN—LAURENCE OLIPHANT—A. W. KINGLAKE.

Captain Blackwood and his family arrived in Edinburgh in the early part of 1848. An arrival is an event much less satisfactory to the biographer than a departure, since naturally the letters—that best source of information—fail when the correspondents are no longer parted, and have it in their power to see each other when they will. It cannot be but that something melancholy must always mingle with such a joyful event. The middle-aged soldier who thus returned, bringing if not many sheaves yet the still more valuable acquisition of a second generation with him, had quitted home at sixteen. He had left a most happy and united family, so many brothers and sisters not yet out of childhood, and with the perfect oneness of a house under its natural rulers, with the father, the most active, the most merry, almost the most youthful of them all, open to every touch of sympathy

and kindness at their hand. Their family union was still extraordinary, though every circumstance had changed; but it was of course a union with a difference, every member of the household having by this time grown into independence, and taking his and her individual place in the world. There are, perhaps, few things in the intercourse of human life more difficult to arrange than such an arrival, and the settling down of the new family by the side of the old. I imagine, though as the letters fail there is no absolute warrant for saying it, that the management of the printing-office did not meet Captain Blackwood's views, and that this intended arrangement fell through; for it does not seem that he had any active share in the business till the close of the year 1849, when he was already preparing to return to India at the end of his furlough—with much regret, no doubt, for several of his children were beyond the age at which they could have been safely taken back to India. But I presume that, before the final arrangements were made, Robert Blackwood's declining health had begun to make it apparent that he was no longer to be calculated upon as able to fill the position of head of the firm, and that the accumulation of all responsibility on the head of John, capable as he had proved himself, became too heavy to be contemplated. The Captain was recalled from the Continent, where he was travelling at the time, late in '49 (shortly before he attained his promotion to the rank of Major), and from henceforward took his place in George Street in active co-operation with his brother, fulfilling many special duties and taking his share in all. When the present writer, who, young

Yours faithfully
W Blackwood

then, is now one of the oldest contributors to the Magazine living, first found a connection with the Blackwood firm, it was through "the Major," as he was then called; and I recollect well the aspect of the mild and courteous soldier, always retaining something of that military air in its finest development, the consideration and gentleness which come in fine natures with the power of command and the habit of dealing with men rather than things—and which forms so happy a contrast with the other qualities of the profession—which marked the individuality of this one figure in a literary group by no means so distinguished. It was through the Major that I sent with trembling in the spring of 1852 my little story called 'Katie Stewart' for the consideration of the Editors—hoping, I suppose, as young people do, that something wonderful might happen, yet scarcely expecting to be admitted to the honours of the Magazine at the first flight (though I was already at twenty-four the author, in youthful presumption, of three or four novels). I had, indeed, I believe, attempted that flight before in the case of 'Margaret Maitland,' my first production, respecting which I wrote a letter full of the sickness of hope deferred, which had so touched the heart of Mr John Blackwood, who took it for the pathetic effusion of an old, sad, and disappointed writer, that he had nearly accepted my lucubrations out of pity, never suspecting that the pathos of that appeal came from a girl of twenty, who did not then know what disappointment meant. I presume it must have been the Major's gentle counsels which turned the scale in the case of 'Katie Stewart,' the first proofs of which, "for the Magazine"! I received on

the morning of my wedding-day—not exactly a moment when the glory and excitement of such a second event could have the appreciation which was its due.

Robert Blackwood disappears from the record as his brother William comes into it. One of the few letters on general business which I find of his is dated from Cologne, July 10, 1847, in which he assures a correspondent of his improvement in health. "For the first time for many weeks do I feel at all like myself, and I have no doubt that a week or two of the Baths at Homburg will put me all right." Curiously enough, in this last letter he repeats, and with great force, that family protest against the persistent rumour which gave the conduct of the Magazine now to one imaginary editor, now to another. Speaking of some public utterance of Professor Wilson on this subject, he gives his correspondent, the manager at Paternoster Row, the following curt and decisive statement:—

Robert Blackwood to J. M. Langford.

He never had any responsibility for what appeared in the Magazine, except his own contributions and poetical criticisms. The publishers always had, and ever will have, so long as it bears the name of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' the sole and undivided responsibility of everything that appears in the work; while at the same time they will ever acknowledge with the liveliest gratitude the powerful and efficient aid of distinguished individuals in very trying times.

This responsibility, so bravely borne, and all the labours into which the elder brothers had been plunged in their youth, had now avenged themselves in the breaking down of the second victim. Robert

lingered in life till the year 1852, but does not seem to have taken any active part in the business for two years before that date. As John came from London to share these responsibilities with him when Alexander fell, so William in India took the place which John had filled, when Robert succumbed — John Blackwood being now the chief and responsible Editor, while his brother, older in years, but accustomed to surroundings and occupations so different, came into his new sphere with the most wonderful adaptability for its novel duties. 'Maga' was now the tradition and inspiration of the family, and it is remarkable to note with what natural instinct each came in his turn into the management, as into an occupation to which he had been born. It must be added that in the two admirable managers in Edinburgh and London, Mr Simpson and Mr Langford, both so well known, they had a backing up and support quite invaluable. Both these gentlemen held their position as if the interests at stake were all their own, and with an entire and unmingled devotion. Both were bachelors, which perhaps makes the absence of ambition and of the desire for personal advancement more comprehensible; and both were largely trusted, and represented their employers on many occasions, securing from the literary band which formed the strength of the Magazine much consideration and friendly respect.

It was in the very end of the reign of Robert Blackwood, when the conduct of the business had already practically been transferred to the hands of John, that Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton came into the front of affairs. His translation of Schiller, as

we have seen, had appeared in great part in the pages of the Magazine, and much correspondence has already been noticed, chiefly between him and the young "Branch" in London, on this and also on political subjects. At the time of the production of 'The Caxtons,' which was the opening of a new and fortunate chapter in the career of the novelist, and an interesting one in that of the Magazine, Sir Edward was one of the best known and most popular of English romance-writers in the high romantic style. His career—begun by 'Pelham,' the most able of the series, in which the elegant chronicler of the finest society combined his superfine revelations with a descent into the thieves' country, and the jabber of thieves' language, already made familiar by Harrison Ainsworth and (*longo intervallo*) by Dickens—had been continued through a series in which the superfine and the high romantic had gradually risen over all other elements, until the name of Bulwer had come to represent fine sentiment and splendid villany, beauty, seduction, despair, and all the other grand passions which appeal to the boudoir and to the milliner's shop with an irresistible fascination. These productions—sometimes historical, sometimes fashionable, metaphysical, romantic, always sentimental—had given him a great reputation, scarcely checked by the new school which Dickens had begun, and in which Thackeray had as yet scarcely made good his footing. But whether he was himself disgusted with this facile fame, or whether perhaps the new leaven coming in stirred him to a higher emulation, I cannot tell, but at all events he was seized with this idea of making a new beginning anonymously, and thus win-

ning a new kind of reputation. In 'The Caxtons' the author took a fresh position, and stirred many a reader who had got tired of Bulwer to renewed interest and admiration. He was now Bulwer Lytton, a personage in politics, an important country gentleman, and one of the few men who, carrying a literary reputation into Parliament, had obtained the approval of that fastidious audience. And 'The Caxtons' marked a still greater change from the old prodigious romances — the tales of passion and splendour, the mystic Zanoni, the exquisite Pelham, the coxcombs and the adventurers. A thread of imitation, which suggested no plagiarism, but rather a not ignoble desire to measure himself against the higher artists of English literature, became instantly visible in the tale, and piqued curiosity. The initial chapters, in which the Shandy group was reproduced,—philosopher, soldier, and buffoon,—immediately seized the attention of the public; and though the story was by no means free of the old high life and romanticism (of which, indeed, the author never shook himself clear), it was an interesting and novel development, and received a most warm and friendly reception from the world. The first letter I find on this subject is full of curiosity as to how the book was received when issued in a complete form. "I fear the 'Times' is a little against them" ('The Caxtons'), he says. "The only criticism that has come to my observation is the 'Examiner'; if you can spare me a sight of any other reports I should be much obliged. I don't want, however, to see any purely ill-natured ones, such as I take for granted that in the 'Athenæum' will be." He adds that he had received a letter from Macaulay on the

subject, "and with his usual critical acumen he points out one or two rather important oversights of mine," which, however, are not specified. It appears that the success of the novel in its separate issue was not so triumphant as had been expected.

I should have supposed [he says] this would be likely to have found its way to a greater demand, though not all at once, than the average of my novels. Their sale I consider to range from 2250 to 2700. I think the last is the number that Bentley counts for 'Harold,' which I should have thought far less adapted for popularity than 'The Caxtons.' Sometimes I find my novels hang fire at first, and revive afterwards. This was the case with 'Eugene Aram,' for which I remember the subscription was only 1000; yet it sold 3000 of the three-volume form. I own, however [adds Sir Edward, wise beyond his period], that I am more and more inclined to think that for great sales the usual three-volume form is wearing out, and think something great might be done by a popular book in a new shape.

But he was of opinion that the form brought in by Dickens, and the orthodox library edition, were both to be discouraged. 'Tristram Shandy' and 'Clarissa Harlowe,' he adds, "came out volume by volume. 'Don Quixote' was published in parts." He proceeds to explain to his no doubt delighted correspondent that he had another novel on the stocks:—

Sir E. B. Lytton to John Blackwood.

A fiction which is, I think, of very original character, which I am studying to adapt as much as possible to the largest circle of readers. For indeed I write it in the honest and earnest aim to do some social good, and counteract, in a popular spirit, much that I think dangerous in recent popular literature. It is more in the vein of 'The Caxtons' than of any other of my works. But the canvas is large, the characters more numerous and varied, and I have entered on a much bolder and broader

humour than I have yet done. In fact, my idea of it (pardon the comparison, which seems presumptuous) is rather this: Conceive for a model what Voltaire would have been had he relinquished some of his cold wit for Goldsmith's genial humour, and had he, instead of seeking to change society, sought to cement it. Such was my fanciful model when I sate down. Voltaire, however, begins to vanish, and the influence of Goldsmith to be more predominant.

My scene is designed to be thoroughly English in country life: a Squire and a Parson play the parts therein as yet that the two brothers do in 'The Caxtons.' My endeavour (if I succeed in it is another matter) is to strengthen the old English cordial feeling, and bind together those classes which the Manchester school are always trying to separate, and the French school would dip into the fusing-pot altogether.

About the same date, the early winter of 1849, Sir Edward began to discuss what is now considered the second book of this series, that wonderful gallery of scenes and pictures, of character and commentary, which he afterwards called 'My Novel.' In introducing this to the publisher he went through a long and elaborate account of the manner of its origin: how a London publisher, through the medium of a mutual friend, offered him a large sum for a serial work to "deal with manners, &c., of what is called genteel life, distinguished from the classes Dickens has so popularly illustrated"; and how, turning this over in his mind, the advantage of such a new medium struck him greatly, though he rejected the idea of a publication like that of Dickens, and thought the suggestion of an issue of numbers costing five shillings each—afterwards adopted by the Messrs Blackwood in the works of another and still more remarkable new contributor—inapplicable to his purpose, and thus was brought to conclude that the Magazine was the

most proper medium through which the world could receive his new work—a conclusion in which the Editor of 'Maga' heartily concurred. One would have thought that this elaborate argument would more fitly have ushered in the first of the series; but the author evidently considered 'My Novel' to be still more original and remarkable than the former work. His confidence in young John Blackwood and his judgment was evidently great.

As our object [he says] is precisely the same—viz., to produce an effective work which may do credit to us both—so I have only to repeat that if you see cause to doubt the key in which this is pitched, I am quite ready to lay it aside. In truth [he adds], I have taken so much pains with it, and rewritten parts so often, that I have got "bothered" with it, and really feel unable to form an opinion upon its faults or merits. You will come to it freshly, and will therefore judge much better.

Every instalment of the story as sent is discussed with anxious care. The author is alarmed "by your confession that you find the interest flag a little in Nos. 3 and 4." "Can you suggest any mode of sustaining it?" he asks eagerly, but comforts both himself and his editor by the enumeration of special points of interest in the chapters that follow. "Perhaps with regard to the sermon it will be safe to submit it to some enlightened liberal clergyman and take his opinion on its safety." This was the sermon of Parson Dale, which we hope for his own sake the reader will remember. All the early part of this book was so genial, so fresh and true, and the two households, that of the Squire and that of the Parson, so admirably put in, with all the accessories of the

country-side—the village and its church (not to say its stocks), the clever boy at school, the quaint foreigner and his still more quaint inventive servant —that the vivid and broad lines of the picture took the world by surprise. It is true that Bulwer was still Bulwer, although he bore another name and was pursuing other methods in a great measure, and when he came to the plot was unable quite to prevent himself from becoming melodramatic; but it was not in the expectation of any reader of that day that he could produce a *paysage* so excellent and so real.

Never, however, was there greater debate than about the form in which the book should finally be given to the world. The author was decided that it should not be in the usual three-volume form. Mr Blackwood's suggestion that it should be published independently of the 'Magazine' in 5s. numbers did not please him. Then he seems to have thought that it could be republished, after the use in the 'Magazine,' in a second serial form, with many more suggestions of various kinds. "My friend Mr Forster" was of opinion that after publication in the Magazine it could be republished "in a series of shilling volumes, . . . twelve or so in number, to admit of a rearrangement at its close, bringing it into either six or four volumes," the one serial following the other at the interval only of a few months. The confidence of the author in his own popularity must have been immense, or he could not have thought of such a proceeding. Finally even Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton had to bow to the conventional, and the book was published with just so much divergence from the established model that it was in four large volumes instead of three.

Some curious indication of how this author worked comes in here and there amid the discussions as to the conduct of the stories which went on between author and publisher. There is not a sign of impatience on the part of the former with any criticism, which indeed he invites from time to time, even going so far, as we have seen, as to propose to lay aside a subject if the judgment of his critic was against it, which fortunately, however, never seems to have been necessary. We are not sufficiently confident in the recollection of the reader of the characters and details of a work published half a century since to reproduce the discussions as to Harley's plans for training a wife for himself, &c., but here is a scrap of information which cannot be called antiquated. "I have pretty nearly six numbers done," says Sir Edward. "I shall now stop—and do a portion of the ending. Then I shall return and work on." This is a method which strikes us as worth considering by the artist of to-day. The middle of a novel is proverbially its dullest part, and who knows but that the excitement of making a jump to the end would quicken his interest in his own work, which is always the first step to securing the interest of the public. To be sure, the number of writers of fiction whose work would furnish fifteen numbers to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' and fill four large volumes of a reprint, must always be few.

Mingled also with the more interesting strains are numberless discussions about the business arrangements, which show the elegant novelist to have been an excellent man of business, fertile in resource, and confident in fortune. Indeed the ordinary brain goes round in contemplation of the wheels within wheels

of Sir Edward's arrangements, his certainty that it can only be to the advantage of all concerned that he should confide a library edition of his works to one man and an illustrated edition to another; while all the while the machines of the publisher who has secured a cheap edition of the whole are whirling on, turning thousand after thousand of volumes at a low price upon the world. We fondly hope, nowadays, that our plans are superior in enterprise and breadth to those of our predecessors, yet we doubt if any of the most popular writers of this later day have even emulated the number and complication of these transactions by which the romancist of a past period, already quite *rococo* in his earlier works, and only holding on to the progress of his time by the cord of these three last novels, pursued, and we believe realised to the full, the material advantages of his work. Not that he was mercenary or grasping. The negotiations all seem to be carried on in a lofty indifference and superiority which the impecunious, alas! can never reach. "You see, therefore," he says, after having described the story and purpose of the last of the Caxton or Blackwood novels, 'What will He do with It,' "that I am in a condition to discuss those matters of the earth earthy which connect the *dulce argentum* with the *vile argentum*":—

Sir E. B. Lytton to John Blackwood.

I think I before stated to you that I had had some very large offers for any work of fiction by me, volunteered by two parties. But I do not wish to put myself up to the highest bidder. You intimated in your reply that you thought we should have little or no difficulty in arrangements for a novel,

though Horan (who, by the bye, is suspended also) proved to be a Bölgrad on the wrong side of the Tweed. I don't mention the amount of the offers I have had, because they are higher than I would wish you to make. And the pleasure of continuing our friendly connection, free from a remorseful conviction that it cost you too dear, has its natural weight in the scale against some ounces even of the *vile argentum.* Perhaps the best plan, however, would be for you to turn the matter over in your mind and say what you think you could venture to propose. I shall await your reply.

In this magnanimous and princely manner the negotiations were begun. They were conducted, we need not say, with equal loftiness and magnanimity on the other side. We do not for a moment mean to insinuate that there was insincerity in the mere ordinary conflict of interests on either side. John Blackwood was a man never led away by any burst of success into great offers beyond the capabilities as he perceived them of business. Rarely, if ever, was he beguiled into the "fancy price" which in our days has become almost as much an advertisement of the publisher as a gain to the author; but he rose to the level of his treatment, and was invariably liberal and even generous in response to those who showed confidence in his good faith. There can be no harm in saying that the price of the novels of the Caxton series, including their publication in the Magazine, and the right for five years to the profits drawn from republication in book form, was three thousand pounds each—a sum very much transcended now in respect to some largely popular books, but admirable, honest pay then for work which never perhaps reached, or could have reached, the wider levels on which literary fortunes are now made.

While this was going on John Blackwood was almost alone in the responsibilities of his work. His brother Robert was nearly altogether withdrawn from it. Sir Edward's letters above quoted are full of sympathetic inquiries as to the progress of his illness and the occasional gleams of better hope. And the brother from over the seas had scarcely settled into his place and accustomed himself to the cares of this very new profession. "Your new ally in your military brother," Sir Edward writes in June 1850, "must find himself at home in 'Blackwood.' There was always a warlike trumpet-tone about the Magazine."

A few political notes, here and there, in the correspondence, are amusing more or less.

> Palmerston [says Sir Edward] must have the statue of Fortune in his room. Any other character who had so embroiled and bedevilled this country with all Powers and parties on the Continent would be swept into limbo. But he is Mamma England's spoilt child, and the more mischief he does the more she admires him. "What a spirit he has!" cries Mamma; and smash goes the crockery!

In another letter Sir Edward gives a report of the opinion of "L. Napoleon," so called, on hearing of one of Lord Palmerston's temporary downfalls. "Oh, I am glad of it. No one I should have liked less for English Foreign Minister if I succeed in forming a strong Government and carrying out my plans. Palmerston had two grievous faults—self-will and intermeddling with all foreign States," the letter goes on. "But he had an English heart, whether it beat right or wrong."

On such subjects, however, we have but a flying

word now and then. 'What will He do with It?' when it came on the stocks, seemed to have interested its writer more than anything that went before. "It has not the graciousness of 'The Caxtons,' nor is it so full of various life as 'The Caxtons,' he says, "but deals with character through humour like them;" and he has an internal consciousness that it is the best work he has done. "I must let the 'inspiration'" (presumptuous word!) "come of itself," he had said while still planning this book. "If I cannot dig a new mine in Humour, I shall try something of a very simple domestic pathos. This I have not yet sounded to its depths, and it has been very little explored in our time." He thinks that if he could "hit off something between Goldsmith and Bernardin de St Pierre" he would be certain of success—"something, in short, in a tale resembling what the 'Lady of Lyons' is as a play—an appeal to domestic emotions." We think that the adventures of Waife were very much superior to anything in the 'Lady of Lyons'; but a father may be forgiven for wishing that the younger members of his family may resemble a beloved early born. It is curious, however, to see how little power of self-criticism was possessed by so experienced a novelist. He speaks of Darrell and Waife as the two chief characters,—Darrell being a quite common melodramatic type of a great orator and statesman, with the gnawing at his heart of a disappointed love, a relic from the old period of Bulwer, and as fictitious as heart could desire; while Waife is full of real pathos, humour, and nature, a genuine creation. "But," adds the novelist, with a graceful compliment to his publisher, "the two char-

acters that come out with a force I never originally contemplated are Jasper and Mrs Crane. Jasper owes his increase of power to you; for you were kind enough to say he was a very fine type, which had never struck me before, and so I took particular pains that he should deserve your approbation. And I do think now that he is as original a beast as has been shown off this many a day." But it is perhaps unfair to betray the secret complacencies of an author over (how often the worst part of) his work.

We cannot resist the temptation of quoting one brief note, which had it been revealed to the ladies of the genial fifties, who had all in their youth adored Bulwer,[1] would have been felt by them, we cannot but feel, the most unkindest cut of all. It was written, as the reader will perceive, in anticipation of a public dinner to be given to the great novelist in Edinburgh:—

Pray let me express a hope that the Music Hall will not be overcrowded with ladies—they always throw a chill upon every audience. Accustomed to talk, it bores them to listen; and their unaccustomed and frigid silence stifles every attempt at a cheer which the labouring orator vainly endeavours to provoke. If those fair refrigerators are to be multitudinous, I hope they

[1] I cannot refrain from a personal recollection here. I was a very small child, indeed seven or eight, but already a confirmed novel-reader, devouring everything that came in the way, as was the habit of my family, when 'Ernest Maltravers' ended, breaking off in the middle of the story with a promise of a sequel, for which sequel I persecuted the proprietor of the nearest accessible circulating library, which in those days was an institution to be found everywhere, Mudie being not as yet. The old lady was first amazed and then shocked that so small a reader should be so eager for such a book, and discoursed to me most seriously on the subject, ending the lecture by bringing forth 'Fatherless Fanny,' an improving work of the period. All being fish that came to my net, I devoured 'Fatherless Fanny' without being less eager for the other works.

will be ranged together and not interspersed throughout so as to leave the whole assembly despoiled of any spark of electricity by non-conductors of silk or muslin.

And this was the fine gentleman, *par excellence* the ladies' man, whose reputation chiefly rested upon their inalienable admiration! But indeed this is the kind of god who, beset by female idolatry, always betrays his worshippers.

The following frank experience of opinion is refreshing. It is from London on receiving the first number of the month's Magazine:—

April 27, '55.

The Magazine reads admirably. I say let any unbiassed man take it up, and the last numbers of the 'Quarterly' and 'Edinburgh,' and if he does not say the Magazine contains more sense and humour than the two combined ten times over, he is a d——d ass.

I had a long talk with Delane to-day. He says he is convinced this Government must go, and Lord Derby come in whether he will or not. He declares that the system of blundering inefficiency that is going on, and has been going on, is beyond all belief—that if I knew all he did I would think the paper remarkably temperate. He gave me several instances. Panmure is evidently no go, and must resign. Delane's account is that he seems to have no resource but blasphemy, in which he indulges all day, partly from the irritation of gout and partly from official embarrassments. Sir John Burgoyne spoke of the taking of Sebastopol as utterly hopeless, but said it would be a great point if we could take it, as it would enable us to get away our army and material. Delane doubtless was colouring, but there is too much truth in it.

A little later he adds:—

May 1, '55.

The look of things in the Crimea is frightful. Had the French Emperor been shot we would have been in a desperate position. Every one supposes that the siege is more or less given up, and

that we must take to the field, leaving great part of our siege material to the enemy.

May 22, '55.

I had a long talk with Delane to-day, and in regard of politics he gave me the following, which he said I might rely upon as absolute fact—which I do.

That little beast Lord John Russell came back to urge peace on the terms for the bare hinting at which Drouyn de Lhuys was instantly dismissed. He consulted with his friends and saw it would not do: moreover, he found that Gladstone and the Peelites, whom he detests, had been beforehand with him with the Peace party. Then he thought of administrative reforms as the line which might tide him to the top again, and was actually under negotiations for attending the City meeting. That he was warned off. Still he is the head of the Peace party in the Cabinet; and in regard to Milner Gibson's motion, Lord Pam and his other colleagues were all Saturday and Sunday under the dread that he might play them the same trick as he did on Roebuck's motion. It is perfectly infamous that when the country believes we have a Cabinet expressly formed on the condition of conducting the war vigorously, this should be the state of matters.

Of course this sort of information cannot be used in an article, but it may help Aytoun for a line. I propose going to Boulogne on Friday. The only obstacle to this is that I should like to see what Aytoun says, and I fear there would be no time for a proof to Boulogne, but I have no doubt you will look after any incautiousness of expression quite as well as I.

April 25, '55.

I saw Lord Eglinton yesterday. He says that Louis Napoleon is positively going to the Crimea. To his knowledge there was a meeting at Windsor: present, the Queen, Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, the Prince, and the Emperor. They were all against the Emperor going, but before the close of the interview he gave them such reason as convinced them all that he should go. He does not, however, know that any time is fixed. At Court everything had gone on as cordially as possible. Lord E. had seen a great deal of the Emperor when in Paris, and he

seems to have told him all his secret policy. E. says he is one of the most wonderful men that ever lived. He thought him clever always, but had no conception of the immense grasp of his intellect.

Poor Emperor! the sad hero of Le Débacle has had so many assailants that every voice in his favour is valuable, even when it is not a very important voice.

We may add here the Editor's very high opinion of Captain (afterwards Sir Edward) Hamley's early writings. I presume it is the 'Story of the Campaign' which is here referred to:—

December 7, '55.

If the public do not take to that book they are beasts! I read it over from beginning to end two nights ago, and I rose from it with the feeling that the writer was one of the most wonderful men who ever lived. That such a book should have been written in such circumstances [in the camp before Sebastopol] is truly marvellous.

The following extract is interesting now, when the merits of the original writers in 'Blackwood' are being compared and discussed:—

May 24, '55.

Our authors are all very clever fellows, but there is more or less of idiocy about them all, and it is very lucky for them that they have gentlemen and men of some common-sense to publish for them. Ferrier is an excellent fellow, and a very clever one, but he has a most unnecessary tendency to run his head against a stone wall. It is quite ridiculous to throw any disparagement upon Lockhart and the other writers: moreover, I have not the slightest doubt that four-fifths of the early 'Noctes' and other matter are the Professor's. In the early years of the Magazine it is quite clear that he had not felt his own strength, and committed as many errors of taste as any of them. It is therefore wrong in every way to put in this slightly impertinent notice of the others.

A short time after this a new contributor, still more important than Bulwer Lytton, appeared upon the horizon of 'Maga.' Mr G. H. Lewes,—one of those men of letters whose reputation is greater than their works, and to a great extent independent of them,—who had been for some time a kind of dropping contributor, now and then sending an article, and known individually to John Blackwood during his residence in London, suddenly appeared in an aspect always agreeable to the house, that of introducing a new writer to their notice. Mr Lewes's letter described this new candidate for reputation as of a timid temper, one whom it was almost impossible to persuade that his production was of any value or importance, and quite unaccustomed to the mode of writing in which he now made his first essay. Mr Lewes himself expressed the highest opinion of the merits, the humour, and pathos of the tale which he enclosed, and intrusted to Mr Blackwood's discriminating judgment. The tale, it is unnecessary to inform the reader who has already heard the story, was that entitled "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," the first, yet one of the most perfect, of the productions of the woman of genius whose name of George Eliot, fictitious as it is and without connection with anything in her history, has been now inscribed in all the lists of fame as one of the great writers of her time.

Mr Blackwood's answer to this letter is characteristic, showing at once the immediate response of a mind competent to judge in such matters, and the momentary vagueness and hesitation attending the entrance of a figure hitherto unknown—George Eliot; but Mr Lewes's friend was for the moment nameless,

without even that pseudonym,—was a stranger like any other, with no foregone conclusion in her favour.

John Blackwood to G. H. Lewes.

EDINBURGH, *November* 12*th*, '56.

I am happy to say that I think your friend's reminiscences of Clerical Life will do. If there is any more of the series written I should like to see it, as, until I saw more, I could not make any decided proposition for the publication of the Tales, in whole or in part, in the Magazine.

This first specimen, "Amos Barton," is unquestionably very pleasant reading. Perhaps the author falls into the error of trying too much to explain the characters of his actors by description instead of allowing them to evolve in the action of the story; but the descriptions are very humorous and good. The death of Milly is powerfully done, and affected me much. I am not sure whether he does not spoil it a little by specifying so minutely the different children and their names.

The wind-up is perhaps the lamest part of the story; and there, too, I think the defect is caused by the specifications as to the fortunes of parties of whom the reader has no previous knowledge, and cannot, consequently, feel much interest. At first, I was afraid that in the amusing reminiscences of childhood at church there was a want of some softening touch, such as the remembrance of a father or mother lends, in after-years, to what was at the time considerable penance.

I hate anything of a sneer at real religious feeling as cordially as I despise anything like cant, and I should think this author is of the same way of thinking, although his clergymen, with one exception, are not very attractive specimens of the body. The revulsion of feeling towards poor Amos is capitally drawn, although the asinine stupidity of his conduct about the Countess had disposed one to kick him.

I daresay I shall have a more decided opinion as to the merits of the story when I have looked at it again and thought over it; but in the meantime I am sure that there is a happy turn of expression throughout, also much humour and pathos. If the author is a new writer, I beg to congratulate him on being

worthy of the honours of print and pay. I shall be very glad to hear from you or him soon.

The following letters tell their own story without need of much comment. The extreme sensitiveness of George Eliot to any check, however slight, appears in the tone of the reply to Mr Lewes's next communication. Mr Blackwood, accustomed to such invitations to criticism as were contained in the letters of Bulwer Lytton, as well as of many more humble persons, fell at once under its influence.

EDINBURGH, *November* 18, '56.

I was very far from intending that my letter should convey anything like disappointment to your friend. On the contrary, I thought the tale very good, and intended to convey as much. But I daresay I expressed myself coolly enough. Criticism would assume a much soberer tone were critics compelled *seriously to act* whenever they expressed an opinion. Although not much given to hesitate about anything, I always think twice before I put the decisive mark, "In type for the Magazine," on any MS. from a stranger. Fancy the intense annoyance (to say nothing of more serious considerations) of publishing, month after month, a series about which the conviction gradually forces itself upon you that you have made a total blunder.

I am sorry that the author has no more written, but if he cares much about a speedy appearance, I have so high an opinion of this first tale that I will waive my objections, and publish it without seeing more—not, of course, committing myself to go on with the other tales of the series unless I approved of them. I am very sanguine that I will approve, as in addition to the other merits of "Amos," I agree with you that there is great freshness of style. If you think also that it would stimulate the author to go on with the other tales with more spirit, I will publish "Amos" at once. He could divide into two parts. I am blocked up for December, but I could start him in January.

I am glad to hear that your friend is, as I supposed, a clergyman. Such a subject is best in clerical hands, and some of the pleasantest and least prejudiced correspondents I have ever had are English clergymen.

A note to Mr Langford expresses the same opinion, with an amusing practical consideration :—

John Blackwood to Mr Langford.

Dec. 24, '56.

The January number begins with the first of a new series by an unknown writer. I do not even know his name. If he is not a first-rate, he is the best simulation I have seen for many a day. All who have read the proof here agree in my admiration. Mr Simpson's only fear is that "Amos Barton" being so perfectly admirable, the man must have exhausted himself in the first story of the series. What will be the effect of two first-rate series going on in the Magazine at once? [The other was Bulwer's 'What will He do with It?'] It has long been a dream of mine that such a combination might work wonders, and now there seems a chance of realising it. I recollect offering Warren any amount if he would set to work on a series while 'My Novel' was going on.

This surmise as to the writer's profession must have caused some amusement in a household so little clerical as that in which George Eliot, without knowing, had stumbled unawares one day into that enchanted land of genius to whose gates there is no key, and into which only those can enter who are to that manner born. The following is the first letter addressed to her, still as Mr Lewes's mysterious friend "the author of 'Amos Barton,'" without even the fictitious name :—

John Blackwood to the Author of "Amos Barton."

Dec. 29, '56.

Along with this I send a copy of the January number of the Magazine, in which you will find the first part of "Amos

Barton." It gives me very great pleasure to begin the number with "Amos," and I put him in that position because his merits well entitle him to it, and also because it is a vital point to attract public attention to the *first* part of a series, to which end being the first article of the first number of the year may contribute.

I have already expressed to our friend Mr Lewes the very high opinion I entertain of "Amos," and the expectations I have formed of the series, should his successors prove equal to him, which I fully anticipate. It is a long time since I have read anything so fresh, so humorous, and so touching. The style is capital, conveying so much in so few words.

You may recollect that I expressed a fear that in the affecting and highly-wrought scene of poor Milly's death, the attempt to individualise the children by reiterating their names weakened the effect, as the reader had not been prepared to care for them individually, but simply as a group —the children of Milly and the sorrow-stricken curate. My brother says, "No. Do not advise the author to touch anything so exquisite." Of course you are the best judge.

When the Magazine was out, and there came the great excitement of hearing what people thought of it—an excitement quite as great to the Editor as to the author—Mr Blackwood, forgetting apparently the sensitiveness of his unknown correspondent, wrote again, desiring in Scottish phrase an "assistant and successor" to "Amos," whose appearance might console the reader for the disappointment caused by the too speedy termination of that story—a disappointment which the present writer remembers to have felt most keenly, and almost as a personal injury. He adds some very wise and discriminating words, as well as a true report of the difference of opinion in respect to the tale:—

The public is a very curious animal, and those who are most

accustomed to feel its pulse know best how difficult it is to tell what will hit the bull's-eye; but I shall be much astonished if the death of Milly does not go to the hearts of all readers. It is a most touching deathbed scene. Critics are a good deal divided by the first part of "Amos," but they generally are about anything of real merit. Some of my friends praise it very much, some condemn. I was rather startled by two of my familiars, about the best men going, declaring dead against "Amos." They have rather modified their opinions now, and I think may probably end by agreeing with me. They were the first men who had seen the Magazine after it was published, and finding two such lads against me, it required all the self-reliance, without which an Editor would be the most wretched dog alive, to make me feel quite easy and satisfied that I was right. With one of them, Colonel Hamley, I do not recollect ever differing in opinion before. He thought the writer very possibly a man of science, but not a practised writer. The idea of a man of science had occurred to me before from some of the illustrations. I forget whether I told you or Lewes that I had shown part of the MS. to Thackeray. He came in about eleven o'clock, when I had just finished your manuscript, and was busy talking about it to Mrs Blackwood. I said to him, "Do you know I have lighted upon a new author who is uncommonly like a first-class passenger." I showed him a page or two—I think the passage where the Curate returns home and Milly is first introduced. He would not pronounce whether it came up to my ideas or not, but remarked afterwards that he would have liked to have read more.

Blackwood was kept on tenter-hooks of impatience after "Amos Barton" had run his short course, and awakened the world to enthusiasm—the members of the Garrick Club mingling their tears with their potations (*Scotticè*, tumblers), and admiring letters coming in from every side—for the second tale, which had been promised, but up to the 10th February had not appeared, for the next number. But by this time the accumulation of many praises had brought the Editor

up to that high pitch of satisfaction at which nothing matters much, whether unpunctuality or the reception in fragments, which 'Maga' in her daring has never refused. Already the signs of a great success were in the air, such as experienced watchers of public opinion could not fail to perceive. "I cannot explain the exact symptoms of popularity, but to me they are tolerably unmistakable," he says. "They reach me in different ways, and an occasional objection I look upon as by no means a bad sign, showing as it does that people are thinking over and discussing the story." "It will be great fun," he adds, after his reference to the Garrick, with naïve faith in the mystification practised upon him, "if you are a member of that society, and hear yourself discussed. I sympathise with your desire for the incognito, although I hope to break through it ere long so far as regards myself." A very deceptive breaking up of this incognito came with the wished-for first number of "Mr Gilfil's Love-Story," which revealed a curious personage, still veiled, still timid and shrinking, notwithstanding a tolerably courageous diction and method, called George Eliot, and I think confessed as a layman and not a cleric, though no further particulars appear. The correspondence was kept up, curiously enough, under this fictitious character for some three years; and although in 1858 the Editor had a personal interview with George Eliot, it was not until the absurd episode of Joseph Liggins, the impostor who claimed to be the author of 'Adam Bede,' that the real author was disclosed to the public a year later. Meanwhile nothing could be more vivacious, friendly, and interesting than the correspondence.

The Editor, now developed from the lively youth we have seen him into a man of sense and judgment, and, without being an artist at all, possessed of a very pleasant gift of easy letter-writing, is at his best in this correspondence; while the lady into whose ears he pours so much genial praise responds with ease of sentence and sentiment. It is, however, so wholly upon the theme of her work, as one masterpiece followed another, and criticism gave way altogether to enthusiasm, that in so limited a sphere as we now have at our command it would be undesirable to continue here any large quotation from this correspondence. We may return to it later, in the volume specially dedicated to John Blackwood and his private and personal life, to which it will be my office to add something of his professional and literary exertions and correspondence in the years during which he stood alone.

In the meantime, it is enough to say that 'Adam Bede' followed the 'Scenes of Clerical Life' with even greater applause than that which had been bestowed upon the first publication; and with an ever-growing enthusiasm on the part of the two brothers John and William, whose genuine delight in the literary power of a contributor, like that which had been the ruling passion of their father, exceeded even their satisfaction in a pecuniary success. Nevertheless the author did not love the frank objections which Bulwer at the same moment was treating with so much attention, and many less illustrious writers looked forward to as the cream of the Editor's letter, almost always judicious and just. Here is an instance of the dislike of criticism. It is curious the anger with

which some writers regard the mistakes (or perhaps impertinences) of the printer, which to others are a fruitful source of amusement. Walter Savage Landor, it may be remembered, desired the printer to be told that no manuscript of his should ever be sent again if he dared to treat it in such a way,—a threat which can have affected the printer very little, however much it might vex the publisher. George Eliot was not quite as vehement as this, but yet uses something of the same argument:—

George Eliot to John Blackwood.

JERSEY, *June* 12, '57.

The printer's reader made a correction after I saw the proof, and though he may sometimes do so with advantage, as I am very liable to overlook mistakes, I in this case particularly object to his alteration, and I mention it in order to request that it may not occur again. He has everywhere substituted the form "the Misses So-and-So" for "the Miss So-and-So's," a form which in England is confined to public announcements, to the backs of letters, and to the conversation of school-mistresses. This is not the conversational English of good society, and causes the most disagreeable jolt in an easy style of narrative or description.

I think you have rather mistaken the intention of the jokes in the playbill. They are not meant as Attic wit but as *Milby*, and any really fine sarcasm would be out of place. I have altered the conclusion a little to prevent that mistake in the reader. . . . My own impression in reading over the account of the confirmation [to which Mr Blackwood had objected] is that readers will perceive, what is the fact, that I am not in the least occupying myself with confirmation in general or with Bishops in general, but with a particular confirmation and a particular Bishop. Art must be either real and concrete, or ideal and artistic. Both are good and true in their way; but my stories are of the former kind. I undertake to exhibit nothing as it should be: I only try to exhibit some things as they have been or are, seen through such a medium as my own

nature gives me. The moral effect of the stories, of course, depends on my seeing truly and feeling justly, and as I am not conscious of looking at things through the medium of cynicism or irreverence, I can't help hoping that there is no tendency in what I said to produce these miserable mental states.

This letter is *apropos* of the story of "Janet's Repentance," as the reader will perceive.

After the great success of 'Adam Bede' the author demurred to the suggestion of printing her next novel in the Magazine, which had been the idea of the publisher. Her reasons for this are as follows:—

I have now so large and eager a public, that if we were to publish the work without a preliminary appearance in the Magazine the first sale would infallibly be larger, and a considerable profit be gained, even though the work might not ultimately impress the public so strongly as 'Adam' has done. Now surely publication in 'Maga,' in the case of a writer concerning whose works there is some expectation and curiosity, would inevitably reduce what would otherwise be the certain demand for three-volume copies. The Magazine edition would be devoured, and would sweep away perhaps 20,000—nay, 40,000—readers who would otherwise demand copies of the complete work from the libraries. To say the least, there is enormous risk that the sale of the completed novel would be diminished Again, the book might be in some respects superior to 'Adam,' and yet not continue in the course of periodical reading to excite the same interest in the mass of readers, and an impression of its inferiority might be formed before republication,—another source of risk. The large circulation of 'Adam' renders the continual advertisement afforded by publication in a first-rate periodical—an advertisement otherwise so valuable—comparatively unimportant. . . .

You see I speak to you without circumlocution, and I am sure you will like that best. You know how important the money question is to me. I don't want the world to give me anything for my books except money enough to save me from the temptation to write *only* for money.

These views, so clear and firm in their statement, produced with other causes a temporary *refroidissement* between writer and publisher, which, I confess for my own part, makes rather an interesting break in the applause on one side and acceptance of it on the other, which, however heartily we may join in the applause, makes us after a while desire the interposition of some other human sentiment to vary the prevailing note. Mr John and the Major, it seems, said little, but felt indignant, especially considering the fact that they had themselves deviated from their bargain in respect to 'Adam Bede' by sending over and above the sum fixed so much as £800 additional, in consequence of the great success of the book. That after this act of generous justice there should be difficulties on the part of the author, refusal of the Magazine, refusal of the price first offered, caused a smouldering feeling that was at last brought to a salutary explosion. To explain this it is necessary to refer to an absurd and indeed ludicrous incident which had lately occurred, bringing great vexation and distress to the author of 'Adam Bede,' and a certain amount of amusement—not malicious, for nothing could be more absurd than the assault—to the world of interested spectators. A certain individual called Joseph Liggins, already referred to, was discovered by a country clergyman, most probably longing for a little publicity in his own person, to claim the authorship of 'Adam Bede'; and though this man had never written a line nor proved himself capable of doing so, a hot fit of excitement and gossip, such as is a godsend to a rural neighbourhood, arose on behalf of this injured person, supposedly robbed of his rights,

his fame, and fortune, and left to starve in his Warwickshire village while somebody unknown flaunted in his just honours. There was a great deal of heated correspondence from Warwickshire, and from at least one clergyman, who reiterated his conviction, "I know that Joseph Liggins is the author of 'Adam Bede,'" with a contemptuous confidence which, we fear, filled the publishing office with laughter, but had a very different effect in the cottage at Wandsworth where George Eliot bewailed her fate. It is difficult for those whose withers are unwrung to realise the depths of resentment and horror produced by such an assault. To the spectator the whole affair was so ridiculous that any expenditure upon it of so much feeling seemed almost to touch with absurdity the outcry against it. But it was natural that this should not be George Eliot's view, and that the laugh of the Blackwoods over what she felt to be an insult and wrong scarcely to be borne should seem to her almost unfeeling. They consented to write to the 'Times,' giving a direct contradiction to the absurd story, but could not be prevailed upon to repeat or enlarge this one statement, and indeed were disposed to treat it with a levity which jarred upon her highly wrought feelings. A point upon which the reader will feel even more sympathy with George Eliot was, that this business made inevitable the disclosure of her own carefully preserved secret, and thus betrayed her peculiar position to the world, upon which she was, as it is easy to understand, deeply sensitive. Her mind, indeed, was so sore in this respect that any, the faintest, suggestion of less attention paid to her wishes by her friends, or any diminution of

her credit with the public, affected her with an almost tragic misery. And Mr Blackwood, notwithstanding his enthusiasm, was too sincere to attempt to persuade her that no harm would be done by the revelation. "As to the effect of the spread of the secret upon the new book, there must be different opinions, and I know there are," he wrote in reply to her long letter detailing the causes of the misunderstanding on her side; but he adds, "My opinion is that George Eliot has only to write her books quietly without disturbing herself with what other people are imagining, and she can command success"—a prophecy which was fulfilled to the letter, and indeed beyond it, since George Eliot, at and after the zenith of her fame, commanded not only success, but a sort of adoring acceptance in every respect.

It is curious now, however, to know that the book which was on the eve of publication when this ridiculous business of Liggins (whose name, I think, brought the absurdity of the story to a climax in the laughter-loving circle of the Editor and his associates) arose, and when her real personality was thus revealed, was injured by the disclosure, and that the foolish part of the public read an equivocal meaning into various portions of a book so spotless, and inspired with a spirit so noble and pure; for Maggie, for sheer honour and duty's sake, gives up the man she loves, and that after he has compromised her, and when her acceptance of him and indulgence of her own natural feelings would have most satisfied the requirements of the world. 'The Mill on the Floss,' perhaps for this reason as much as its own admirable qualities, has become the one of her books most closely

associated with George Eliot, and the one in which her special devotees delight to find something of a reflection of herself, not only in the beautiful childhood and youth portrayed in the book, but in the suggestion of injustice done to the heroine, far as the circumstances are from any resemblance to those of the author. But the faint cloud upon the sky, thus originating, was of very short duration, and the reputation of the great novelist soon surmounted the temporary shock.

We know, through the letters of Mr Lewes and otherwise, how sensitive George Eliot's mind was in respect to adverse criticism, and how great her tendency towards despondency and disbelief in her own genius. At the same time, we find that she was an admirable woman of business, alert and observant of every fluctuation of the book-market, and determined that in every way her works should have the fullest justice done them. There is no commoner subject of mourning and indignation on the part of authors whose works do not sell sufficiently to please them, than that of inadequate advertisement and the perverse inclination of publishers (notwithstanding that it is always their interest as much as that of the writer to sell) to keep their works behind backs, and confuse the minds of intending purchasers as to how and when they are to be had. I have seen an indignant author gloomily investigating the railway bookstalls to find with certainty that one cherished book was not there, and pouring forth vials of wrath upon the publisher for the culpable negligence which alone could have caused it. But it is less usual to find a very popular and

successful writer taking up the same complaint. The following letter will show how keenly professional George Eliot became, and how strong in the defence of her apparent rights:—

George Eliot to John Blackwood.

Feb. 22nd, '62.

I cannot be quite easy without expressing to you the difficulty I feel in understanding the mode in which the advertising of my books is managed. I have no doubt Mr Simpson regulates the advertisements according to the system he regards as best for our common interests; but it would be well that he should have under his consideration a few facts which have come under our experience, and which indicate that to the majority of readers the fact of my books having entered a new edition remains quite a secret. Very various people, all in a condition to be apprised of literary matters, have within the last few weeks and days manifested entire ignorance of the fact either by inquiries or by expressions of surprise; and others who were anxiously looking for a notice that the cheaper edition of 'Adam Bede' was come out, were still not aware that it was so. The appearance of an advertisement in a list is passed over as probably nothing more than the ordinary presentation of the old edition. I think you have seen enough of me to know that I do not willingly obtrude my opinion on business matters, and you will prefer that I should say at once what I cannot help dwelling on a little mentally rather than retain a sense of puzzled dissatisfaction about it. For example, I ask in wonder why, if the 'Mill on the Floss' is to appear at the beginning of next month, any announcement is not inserted in this week's papers?

If you will consider this and point out my difficulty to Mr Simpson, I shall be much obliged.

While speaking of George Eliot, it must not be forgotten that George Henry Lewes was at the same time a tolerably steady contributor to the Magazine. His papers were generally, if not always, on subjects

of natural history, and it is curious to find remarks and replies upon such small deer as his papers on "Food," "Digestion," "Only a Pond," &c., jostling in one small sheet of paper the discussion of the larger fortune so closely connected with his. In the earlier correspondence, however, there are few traces of the almost extravagantly watchful and constant care with which he seemed in later days to surround the great novelist. Then she does her business herself, with the clear head and strong intelligence which might be divined from her work, but on her possession of which all later reports tended to cast doubts. Lewes was occupied with his own affairs also, and his communications are frequent with the publishers, who had a hand open for great and small alike. Here is a characteristic note, from Lewes alone, which we are tempted to quote. It accompanies a promise to "cut out all objectionable passages" in one of his articles:—

G. H. Lewes to John Blackwood.

But you must confess it is an awful wet blanket on a writer's shoulders that terror of lady readers, and what they will exclaim against. I am tempted to exclaim with Charles Lamb, "Hang up the ladies! I will write for antiquity."

The friends to whom John Blackwood referred in his first letter to Lewes on the subject of the 'Scenes of Clerical Life,' as disagreeing with him as to the superlative merits of "Amos Barton"—the opinion of "two such lads" having almost made him waver in his own more enlightened conviction—were, for he made haste to name them, Colonel Hamley and Professor Aytoun, who both ranked among the leading

contributors during his early editorship. Aytoun had, indeed, ranked high on the list for several years, and, as has already been mentioned, had made his first great hit in the Magazine with his "Glenmutchkin Railway" during the period when the elder brothers still held the direction of everything; but the stream of wit and wisdom, high romance and more attractive nonsense, which he poured through the Magazine in the mature height of his talents, continued through the early portion of the reign of John, with whom he formed a fast and familiar friendship which lasted as long as his life. He was one of the men accredited in his time with the editorship of 'Maga,' for what reason it is very difficult to imagine. The foolishness of such an idea could not be more clearly demonstrated than in the correspondence we have just quoted; for Aytoun, it is clear, though full of ability—indeed something which might be called genius in his own proper style—was no critic, in the sense at least in which John Blackwood was, and did not share his friend's faculty of discovering genius in others. He was afterwards converted, we are glad to say, to George Eliot, and found himself obliged to send away the second and third volumes of 'Adam Bede' out of his house until the article he was writing should be finished—which were signs of grace, he having already disgraced himself by consuming at a draught the first of these volumes while the printer's devil was kicking his little legs in the hall, and the press was waiting. Some of Aytoun's most delightful productions, which formed part of the volume by "Bon Gaultier," composed by his friend Theodore Martin and himself, had no connection with

the Magazine; but the charming humour of 'Firmilian,' one of the most complete portraits and mirthful satires ever written, first appeared in a pseudo-review in the Magazine, and was afterwards published in full by Messrs Blackwood, not to speak of the stirring and chivalrous 'Lays of the Cavaliers,' his more serious poem 'Bothwell,' and various others, including innumerable reviews and political articles.

Aytoun was for some time the chief henchman of the Magazine, always ready to do it yeoman's service, and ready to treat either public events or books, according as the humour moved him or the periodical had need. Hamley came later, with some clever stories of barrack life and adventure from Gibraltar, and a lively novel, 'Lady Lee's Widowhood'; while his 'Story of the Campaign' from the camp before Sebastopol gave the readers of 'Maga' the exciting sensation of an individual report for themselves from the very heart of the war. Sir Edward Hamley also remained until the end of his life an occasional contributor to the Magazine and close friend of its Editor, as 'Maga' on her side remained the constant and warm champion of the high-spirited soldier through the vicissitudes of his career.

Another distinguished contributor of this period was Laurence Oliphant, then beginning his remarkable career. But the importance of these gentlemen to 'Maga,' and of their correspondence with the Blackwood house, comes out more fully in the later portion in which John Blackwood stood alone.

To show the business connections in general which flowed from all quarters into Edinburgh, I may add here letters from a successful and from an unsuccessful

author. Everything else must yield the *pas* to misfortune. It is its one compensation for its fate—and the communication is very short at least. It is from Ireland, from "a country clergyman ground down by poor-rates, and obliged to turn my hand to any honourable and allowable occupation for the support of a large family."

If you will publish this, and pay me for it, I shall be much obliged to you [writes this straightforward correspondent]. If you publish it without paying me, I shall be content. If you do not choose to do either, please to commit it to the back of your fire.

There is no indication as to what "it" was—whether gay or grave, whether story or sermon. The note alone lives, dated 30th January 1850, clean and fresh as if written yesterday, spared by the dust which has gathered thick upon the companion paper which has lain alongside of it for thirty-five years, and which speaks as follows for itself. It was from Mr A. W. Kinglake, already everywhere known as the author of 'Eothen':—

A. W. Kinglake to Messrs Blackwood.

BRIGHTON, *Sept.* 10, 1862.

In 1856 Lady Raglan placed in my hands the whole of Lord Raglan's papers, including not only all the secret despatches, but also the whole of his private correspondence with ministers, with ambassadors, with generals, with reigning sovereigns, and, in short, with all the public characters who were brought into relations with him in the course of the war. This being known, I came to be looked upon as the person to whom every information requisite for establishing the truth ought to be given, and the result has been that—without, I must own, any great energy on my part—I have become the depositary of almost all that is known on the subject. To give you an idea of the extent to which this has gone, I may mention that the French military

authorities sent over an officer of rank with a "mission," as they called it, to impart to me what they had to say about the battle of the Alma.

Now, in the army and amongst public men there is a belief that grave injustice was done at the time to this country, and to some of our officers and other public servants, including Lord Raglan himself, and it is imagined—I don't say whether rightly or wrongly—that I am the person who, with the materials above spoken of, is to redress all the wrongs and throw a new light on the war. The result is that for a long time, I may almost say, I have been shunning society on account of the eternal When? When? with which I am met wherever I go. It may be said that this is the interest of the mere upper classes and not of the great public; but still, as it is an interest based on a jealous love for our common country and respect for the character of public men, it is evidently very different from that sort of curiosity which is sometimes confined to a mere section of the community.

My aunt, Mrs Woodforde, with whom I am staying, is so anxious to see the relation of author and publisher established between us that she, in her extraordinary kindness, has determined to take a flight to Scotland to endeavour to arrange the matter with you. She is quite *au fait* at business, more so, indeed, than I am, and has my entire confidence.

I may say to you that although I have been so much laden with information, I do not, I think, reproduce in such a way as to encumber the book. It is merely by permeating, as it were, my brain that particles of it will reach the public.

This was the first modest beginning of the great work on the 'War in the Crimea.' "Without giving myself credit for any exceeding power of attracting the public by offering them a second attempt at a book," the writer says, he still felt it indispensable to fulfil the expectations placed upon him. And we imagine there has been no such work about battles and fighting written by any layman.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MAJOR BLACKWOOD.

A CYCLE OF NOTEWORTHY FICTION—'MAGA' A LIVELY CENTRE OF LITERARY LIFE—ADVENTUROUS BROTHERS OF THE PEN—'THE MILL ON THE FLOSS'—THE LEVIATHAN MUDIE—THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF DISCOUNTS—A MONUMENT TO, AND PROJECTED LIFE OF, WILSON—LOCKHART'S FIRST MEETING WITH THE PROFESSOR—HAMLEY'S CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE TRENCHES BEFORE SEBASTOPOL—AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT BY MRS OLIPHANT—WARREN IN PARLIAMENT—CAIRD'S 'RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE'—AMUSING DINNER-PARTY AT WARREN'S—BULWER'S "SPLENDID CALM" ON JOINING THE CABINET—CURIOUS STORY OF A STOLEN DESPATCH—PALMERSTON AND LORD DERBY—"DIZZY"—SIR JOHN WATSON GORDON—PERSONAL NOTE BY MRS OLIPHANT—DEATH OF MAJOR BLACKWOOD.

THERE had never perhaps been a time when a band of contributors more active and productive surrounded the Editor of the Magazine. There was no onslaught upon the world, as in the old days when Wilson or Lockhart or Maginn was always in the act of couching a lance, and generally a very sharp one, if not at any one in particular, yet at the culpable vagaries of the Whigs and the world. And, to tell the truth, 'Maga' never lost her love for a bit of keen criticism, or, above all, for a critic who could employ the arts of ridicule to advantage and laugh an adversary into fury; but times and tempers were milder than in former days, and the slashing article had died out as a

branch of literature. Fiction was exceptionally strong in a cycle which had secured the three best novels of Bulwer and the new sensation of the 'Scenes of Clerical Life'; and the soldiers and travellers, and all the adventurous kind of the brothers of the pen, always welcome in the Magazine, and for whom up to the present time it has retained its partiality, thronged about that lively centre of literary life. Three brothers Hamley and three brothers Chesney, all soldiers, flowed into the ranks. Mr White, the author of 'Sir Frizzle Pumpkin,' half soldier, half clergyman, laughed and jested his way through many a pleasant article. Mr Lucas Collins, another clergyman of a different order, one of the most accomplished and scholarly of the contributors of 'Maga,' lent a strong and steadfast support. It would be false modesty not to allow that I had myself in these days a fluctuating but considerable share in bringing grist to the mills of 'Maga.' The old names had almost entirely disappeared; the long, affectionate, but much-provoked and often impatient struggle with "the Professor" for an occasional article had ended; De Quincey had fallen out into confused and lower paths; but in steadfast support and varied and unfailing supply the Magazine had never been more strong, and if the personal relations of the Editor and the writers might be less close than those of the three or four champions of the beginning with the enthusiastic editor-publisher, William Blackwood of Princes Street, they were still more individual than those of any other periodical. The new men were almost all contemporaries of John Blackwood, and lived with him like brothers—often guests in his house—keeping up from all the corners

of the earth a frequent correspondence, always with an eye open for "what would do for the Magazine," and throwing themselves with the warmest personal interest into everything that concerned its success and fame.

Meanwhile the support of his brother was constant and loyal. Major Blackwood, whose training in life had been so different, yet who fell into his place with the ease and satisfaction which seemed natural in his father's son, did not, I think, in any case interfere with John's responsibility as the first in all literary questions and decisions, but stood by as the most loyal and deeply interested of counsellors. It was a fine tradition of the house that the money matters, so important in the continual traffic with persons little endowed with coin and much with pride and susceptibility, should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the family, so that a writer might seek an advance, as so often happened, or forestall what was due to him, without the painful feeling that his necessities were open to the counting-house; and this delicate portion of the business was, I think, in the Major's hands, who knew how to do a service of this kind with all the suavity and gentleness which were his characteristics. He had his share with his brother, as has been seen, in the immediate appreciation of George Eliot, and his instinctive protection of the touching deathbed scenes in "Amos Barton" even from his brother's criticism shows the fine perceptions of his nature, though without any training for that art. His letters to Mr Langford about the affairs of the firm, and also those which, taking his turn in the periodical revision of the branch in London, he wrote to his brother, afford

many pleasant touches of character and scraps of the news of the day. In one of these he expresses himself with great regret as to an unfortunate accident which had happened to Mr Warren while in the act of lecturing to a country audience. "Anything more absurd than an exposition of 'The Lily and the Bee' to such an audience cannot well be imagined," says the Major. That extraordinary work — one of John Blackwood's few mistakes in literature, for he continued to think it would still make a mark even after the first illusion, an opinion the Major did not share —had more or less put an end to Warren's remarkable literary career; but as he had by this time been appointed to the respectable post of Master in Lunacy (though the title of the office prompts a smile), it is probable that much additional occupation was at the bottom of this cessation of literary work. That the clergyman with whom Warren had been staying should have "taken our friend's failure as a text for a homily on contentment" struck the Major's sense of humour, which was keen. He adds:—

Major Blackwood to J. M. Langford.

Colonel Hamley's book is certainly a good price, but we have thought it a book that will better that, if ever a book will. You have been very successful, indeed, with the engravings, both coloured and plain. My brother almost regrets he had not decided upon having more of them coloured.

The article upon Thackeray in the 'Quarterly' both my brother and Aytoun had decided to be Lady Eastlake's, and very little credit to her ladyship's ability. It being the editor's does not say much for him. . . . Mr Eagles died on the morning of the 9th instant. We regret him much, and will often, I am sure, feel the want of so constant a contributor and excellent friend.

17th March 1857.

I am scarcely surprised that there is something of a drop in the subscription to vol. vi. of Alison. The way he is lengthening the work out must prove a serious bar to its continued wide circulation. We have given him many hints on the subject, but he will not, or cannot, find time for compression.

2nd April.

I feel very curious about the public's reception of 'The Mill.' Parts of it are, I think, of deeper interest than any of 'Adam Bede.' I felt as you do about the conclusion. The catastrophe, not springing in any way out of previous events, leaves a feeling of disappointment or void in the reader's mind. He does not feel satisfied, although he had quite made up his mind to the death of Maggie. I read the book piecemeal, which is a bad way for the story. But whatever may be said of the story, the merits of the characters will make it a first-rate success, I have little doubt.

There are some curious indications of the struggle with the new-born force of "Mudie," in which most publishers at this moment of literary history were involved. Mudie in those days did not mean an irresponsible company, limited, but one very energetic, very brisk and enterprising man, attached to the Dissenting interest, and with a curious understanding of that ocean of middle-class and unliterary readers which in its magnitude swamps all criticism and carries with flowing sail many an indifferent talent to success. Mr Mudie himself carried a very flowing sail in those days, giving the best of advertisements to a book by announcing the number of copies of it he had in circulation in his libraries, and doing more, perhaps, than any other agency in existence to make a name, or at least to ensure a sale. He began with "100

copies of So-and-So at Mudie's Library" (my own first production was honoured so, and I confess it seemed to me in those days that the patronage of Mudie was a sort of recognition from heaven), until at the time of 'Adam Bede' he had risen to 1000, thus giving an immediate proof of immense circulation and demand equally flattering to the writer and conducive to further triumphs. But there were modifications, so far as the publisher was concerned, in the aid thus given, though it was invaluable in its way. These were the days when the three-volume novel was in the height of its ascendancy, and no profane imagination had so much as thought of displacing it. But Mr Mudie was more or less of an iconoclast, and though it had not then entered into his mind to attempt such a revolution as that carried recently into effect by the agency of the company which has succeeded him, — the conversion of the time-honoured three volumes, dear to every older reader, into the often shabby and closely printed one, — he worked very strenuously at the thin edge of the wedge, by demanding a great reduction in the price when he gave such vast orders as the above. This was reasonable, and it was in many cases acceded to without hesitation. I cannot enter into the growing influence of discounts, reductions, and extra copies which had for some time been working underneath the surface of the Trade, and undermining by all kinds of cheapening influences the profits of literature. It had not yet gone very far in that day. I speak as an outsider, knowing only by the hints and allusions and scraps of information which a writer could not help hearing, however little knowledge of business might be his or hers.

Many lively but broken reports of the fray appear in the letters of John Blackwood to his brothers while he was the "Branch" in London. That books should be sold like loaves, thirteen to the dozen, that the famous "deduction on taking a quantity" should be acknowledged as necessary to any large sale—these are principles, I believe, quite old-fashioned now that the cheapening has descended through every grade of bookselling down, down to the retail threepence in the shilling which threatens to bring down books, like corn, to a selling point which is less than the cost of production; but they were all combated in detail by young John, from 1840 downwards, with many lively skirmishes and encounters against the embattled forces of the Row. The time of compromise, however, had begun, and these diminutions gradually came to be the order of the day. Then it became known, to the great indignation of more important publishers, that such a firm as that of Messrs Newby, who published inferior novels by the thousand, were giving their three-volume novels boldly, at half the published price, to the great library which had grown up, like Jonah's gourd, in a moment, and threatened to change the very constitution of affairs for the English author and publisher. I believe the house of Blackwood was the last to give in to this system. Some glimpses of their resistance to Mudie, who led the revolutionary forces, may be seen in the letters addressed to Mr Langford, from which I give a few extracts. In the end of the year '55 Mr John Blackwood writes to Mr Langford to "manage the Leviathan Mudie as best you can." "I dislike," he says, "giving him the commission, but we must some-

times yield to expediency." Later his opinion is expressed with more geniality :—

John Blackwood to J. M. Langford.

Dec. 22, '58.

It gives me great pleasure to hear of Mudie taking the thousand. He must be a clever fellow, and I have no doubt you have managed a tough battle with him very judiciously.

We will not give 'Adam Bede' on lower terms to Mudie than 'What will He do with It?' [he adds a little later]; and on these terms I am sure it will be a capital thing for his library. Knowing as we do the merits of 'Adam Bede,' there could not be a better book to stand upon. If Mudie likes to have 500, he may have 10 per cent off, but not that discount for a smaller number. The only cases in which it is fair to give him a larger discount than the others are when he takes a large number of a book the disposal of which requires exertion, and a certain amount of risk is run. Now, I don't think 250 of 'Adam Bede' can in any degree be looked on in this light.

Here, however, is a more friendly note on the same subject :—

His [Mudie's] commentators seem to think he has no right to conduct his business in his own way. In his position I would not disturb myself about them, nor publish anything on the subject.

Next year, when 'The Mill on the Floss' was in question, Mudie's name comes forward again. This time it is Major Blackwood's mild hand which repulses the attempted restriction upon the free action of the publishers :—

Major Blackwood to J. M. Langford.

With regard to Mudie we cannot bind ourselves not to publish a 12s. edition until a twelvemonth has passed, or till any other time. We have no power to do so from our agree-

ment with the author. We do not, however, think it advisable either for authors or publishers to publish a cheaper edition until the three-volume one has had its full swing, but when this may be we could not fix just now. . . . We published the first edition of 'Adam Bede' sooner than we think we should have done for our own interest, having then only the comparatively limited sale of the author's previous work, 'Clerical Scenes,' to guide us. We cannot, however, see that Mr Mudie suffered by our doing so. The large number he took of the 12s. edition showed that he had not nearly enough of the three-volume edition wherewith to supply his readers. On referring to our books I see he had 1500 of the three-volume edition, 235 he had in May. The two-volume edition was published in June: he took 250 immediately and another 250 a week later, and 400 in July and August. Looking, therefore, both to the inconvenience to the author and ourselves of coming under any engagement as to the time of publishing a cheaper edition, and to past effects in a similar case upon Mr Mudie's interest in such an edition, we do not think he has any reason to ask us for such a guarantee. We should be glad to meet his wishes or oblige him in any way we could, but a guarantee would tie us up in a way that might not only be inconvenient in the present case, but a precedent in future ones.

Mr Mudie, the original creator of an institution which has become so enormous, and of so much importance both to the readers and the writers of England, went perhaps too fast and too far in the speculations about books, which were much founded on his own appreciation of the works themselves, specially in their moral tendencies. The world is very indignant now with any exercise of a literary censorship of this description, but I am not sure that people then, and even writers whose books were not placed on his Index, did not think it rather a good thing that some one should exercise a certain restraint of this kind. Such a restraint is always injudicious,

and wrong in some cases, and a dangerous power to be permitted in any. But it is to be supposed that the effect of so large a gathering of all the smaller libraries into one was believed to be good on the whole for the distribution of literature, for when Mr Mudie's affairs fell into confusion he received an almost unanimous support from the most eminent and respectable publishers, by which his system was maintained and finally brought to the enormous proportions it has attained now. The following letter, so like the old intercommunication between brother and brother from the earliest days when Alexander represented Robert in London, and Robert represented Alexander in Edinburgh, shows us the Major in Paternoster Row, and paying his visits in town to see what everybody was doing, and chiefly what everybody was writing—keeping up the old friendships, and with a watchful eye to the present interests of the house. I am myself specially moved by glimpses through these kind eyes of a period long swept away into the gulf of time,—a little house full of youth and hope, in which a young woman bearing my name, and faintly recognisable by my own memory, received the gentle soldier-publisher, and talked of cheerful undertakings and many pieces of work long forgotten; but these interviews are not sufficiently interesting for the public ear:—

Major Blackwood to his Brother John.

27th May 1854.

I saw Bulwer yesterday: he was in very good spirits, and looking well—quite idle in the way of writing except the parliamentary portraits he mentioned to you. He has made considerable progress with them, but is doubtful, however, whether they will do for the Magazine, as he sketches the

leaders [Hampden, &c., in the time of Charles I.], and fears the view he takes of them will be too eulogistic for 'Maga.' I said, as they were quite historical characters now, I thought the tone he was taking would not be such as to signify in 'Maga,' and that, from the excellence of his former sketches of the same kind, we expected great things. He said he thought the whole would be about 1000 lines, and must be published anonymously in the first instance. He asked if Gilfillan had ever done anything for us, and then went on to say that he had got a letter from him with a copy of his book ['Literary Portraits'], and said he hoped Sir E. would read it, although among the friends in Edinburgh who had shown him so much attention during his visit were his (G.'s) bitterest enemies. Sir Edward seemed to think a good deal of the book, though extravagant in style. I told him there was feud between the gifted author and Aytoun, and recommended to him the character of Apollodorus in 'Firmilian': he promised to read 'Firmilian' with attention.

From Bulwer's . . . I walked on to Lockhart's, and found him in all the bustle of a flitting—in fact, with everything out of the house except on the top storey. He is certainly looking much better than he did in September last. His colour is better, and he talks more confidently and cheerfully. He thought we should get a tolerable amount of money for the Professor's monument in London, and that he was sure of getting leave for the board in the Athenæum Club. He made no allusion to a selection of the Professor's works, nor to a life; and as he was evidently somewhat bothered with his moving, I did not like to introduce the subject.

Warren has taken it into his head that it will be better to publish his Miscellanies as a separate work. What do you think? I said I should like to consider the matter after looking at the Miscellanies again. Close upon 3000 of Alison's volume 3 have been sold in London, which is not so bad.

This glimpse of the last chapter in the lives of the two, once champions and leaders of 'Maga,' is sufficiently pathetic. The Professor's monument to be thought of, and perhaps the other monument of a

posthumous edition and a life, if his brother in arms would undertake it—those formal, solemn signs that he and his big, never fully effective, life was over, being less sad than the sight of his old companion in the empty dismantled house: empty, like the melancholy remnant of his existence. The picture is almost allegorical in its perfect simplicity.

The rest of the letter shows us what amongst the many businesses of the firm was the Major's special care:—

The Swede was to give an article for this number on the Bothy system. Stir him up. I have written Dudgeon to send in his nephew's translation of Lavergne, 'Rural Economy of Great Britain,' for review in the Journal. I think Patterson may make a very nice paper or two out of it. Will you speak to him as soon as D. sends in the MS.? I have not yet got a copy of the original French. If M. is still in Edinburgh, perhaps he would be inclined to take the subject up. I would like the paper for next number, however.

This was the 'Journal of Agriculture,' now given over to Major Blackwood's care, for which Mr Henry Stephens (called the Swede) had been so anxious to provide the most admirable illustrations in much earlier days—illustrations which were adopted for 'The Book of the Farm,' and gave young John much trouble when he was "the Branch" in London.

And here is an elucidation of the politico-commercial ideas of the time, which is not without interest in the various questions which are rising into fresh importance among ourselves to-day:—

PATERNOSTER ROW, *6th June* '54.

From the tone of Hastie's [M.P. for Paisley] communications I incline to think there is no very favourable feeling towards

the Ministry among the mercantile classes, even free traders and Liberals. He lately moved for a return to the House of our imports from and exports to Australia. "You ought to get it, and put it," he said, "in the hands of one of your people who can take up such subjects, Blackwood. It's very curious. People say all this prosperity is from free trade. Free trade is very well. It has helped us, no doubt, but it is the gold that has done the thing. Get the return. You'll see what has gone to Australia since the gold was found."

This is very good from the Paisley member. He scouted the idea of the gold, too, you may recollect, a twelvemonth ago. I have got the return, and will send it to you. It certainly is curious and instructive. In the year ending January '50, our exports were only between three and four millions. In that ending January '54, they were betwixt fourteen and fifteen millions. You will, I daresay, be well satisfied to gratify Hastie by making use of such a return, if possible. He thinks the interest of money will keep high, not from any scarcity, but because there is no usury law now, and the demand for money so long as the war lasts will be great. In the last war it always kept up to the legal rate, notwithstanding the paper currency; now there being no such check, he thinks, notwithstanding the gold, it will keep up at a high rate as long as the war lasts.

Among the literary reports, as usual in all the letters, Lockhart always takes the first place. A few days later the Major saw him again, always with a reference to the projected life of Wilson, which never came to anything:—

8th June 1854.

I saw Lockhart again yesterday. He is in a very nice locality in St John's Wood, with a good garden (for London neighbours at least), round which he took a turn with me. He was in tolerable spirits, and I was about an hour with him. Ferrier he will gladly assist. He doubted, however, whether he had any letters that would do for publication. They were either so careless, or so egoistical and self-laudatory, that he did not

think they would do. This he gave me a specimen of, which I'll reserve till I see you. I mentioned G., and what he wanted to have done. He said he was a detestable puppy, and threw in sundry scorpion-like touches to point his character. He gave me an account of his first meeting with the Professor, which was at a bull-bait. His account was enlivened by some very satirical touches. Of old Murray, too, he gave me several anecdotes.

Various reflections as to the troubled atmosphere consequent on the war in the Crimea appear in Major Blackwood's letters during the following winter, when he again represented the firm in London; and we almost feel the excitement of the stormy meetings in the House, and the flying rumours out of doors, as we read. A friend, with bated breath, communicated one of these to him, evidently without convincing the Major:—

PATERNOSTER ROW, 20*th January* 1855.

He told me, under the most solemn vows of keeping quiet, that there are reports of the Emperor of Russia having in his possession letters both from the Queen and Prince, giving him assurances that there would be no war, a most grave matter. "Not a word of it, Captain, to any one." Fancy a Queen's Counsel, sworn to solemn secrecy, repeating such a thing. A fearful onslaught will be made, he said, on the Ministry in Parliament. Hastie said the same thing. "*You'll never have seen anything like what will be said of them,*" were his words. Aberdeen and Newcastle will be the special marks. Gladstone will get his full share.

I breakfasted with Hastie this morning. He was very kind and cordial, and said he was really glad to have got the appointment for George. He told me how he had got it. He had got the promise of one some time ago from Marjoribanks, meaning it for J.'s son; but he thought he could get another from Sir Charles Wood, so he asked for it, and gave me the first. This is not to be repeated, his getting two cadetships in one year.

He was very great on the misconduct of the war, both on the part of the Ministry and the generals.

George above mentioned was the Major's second son, who became a distinguished officer, and died gallantly at Maiwand, as has been already said. The victims of examinations may be pleased to hear that even in those days Indian appointments were not very easily obtained.

One of Major Blackwood's occupations in town was to arrange the execution of a set of drawings sent home from Sebastopol by young Captain Hamley, and affording a sort of panorama of the seat of war. This was done by means of coloured lithographs of the soldier's sketches, which were not in themselves of much excellence, but interesting, as authentic, in the great excitement about that fateful spot, where the country was enraged to hear its best troops lay, with every aggravation of discomfort to increase the natural horrors of war, badly provided, badly handled. On his return to his other duties in Edinburgh, "Hamley's packet" is one of the first things mentioned, and his letter on the subject shows how real a part he took even in the strictly editorial part of the business:—

Major Blackwood to his Brother John.

EDINBURGH [some time in 1855].

How simple is his account of Craigie's death, and how much it says for him in two or three words. I incline to think the paragraph about the non-receipt of the 'Times' in Sevastopol may be left out. The other reference to the 'Times' is, I think, so natural on the part of an officer that it may stand. I feel most doubt about the conclusion, the minutely circumstantial account of the French mine. The narrative effect is admirable, but then he wrote it under the idea that the assault would be

made before it was published. Can anything now delay the assault? I daresay not, and we may trust to his discretion and let the thing stand.

And here is a slight sketch of an afterwards successful journalist, who, I believe, owed his position on the 'Times,' and consequently his opening in life, to the efforts of John Blackwood in his favour:—

I also send you a manuscript of Mr Dallas's. You had some conversation with him about it. I think he must have left it a day or two after you went away. He called yesterday wishing to know its fate. He goes to London to-morrow, and will probably apply to you. He sat for about a quarter of an hour, and seems a particularly nice fellow. I have read some ten or twelve pages of his MS., and don't think it will do. His opinion about the young poets is not to be endorsed, but it strikes me as nicely written, and that he is a lad something may come out of yet.

We may here interpose a letter written shortly after by Mr John Blackwood, which shows the immediate result of the interest of the brothers in this gentleman. He writes to Mr Langford in Paternoster Row to send "a copy of Mr Finlay's book to G. S. Dallas," which is characteristic, especially the conclusion:—

John Blackwood to J. M. Langford.

St Andrews, *October* 18, '55.

You will of course carefully keep the following secret.

Mr Dallas is the writer in the 'Times.' They took him on my introduction and recommendation. After the paper on 'Maud,' Delane sent him the 'Noctes.' It is very satisfactory. I had been pleased with what I had seen of him, and thought the specimens he showed me of what he had written exceedingly good and admirably adapted for the 'Times.'

I did a kind thing from the most disinterested motives, and it looks as if I would have my reward.

This reward, we need not say, was the increased interest likely to be shown in the 'Times' concerning all the Blackwood publications—a rule, however, which did not always hold, notwithstanding the warm friendship of Mr Delane and the grateful recollection of several members of the Thunderer's staff.

The Major resumes with what seems a very just remark upon the impending publication of Professor Ferrier, of the old 'Noctes,' so far as they could be identified with Wilson. He dislikes "the passages on Kean":—

Major Blackwood to his Brother John.

It was a *sin* in the original 'Noctes' such a personal joke, but its republication now can only hurt the 'Noctes.' I mean that no one's feelings would be hurt by it now, and it would only be considered as one of the blots of the 'Noctes,' which I really don't think would be much cared about. The mischief is, that if one passage is deleted as objectionable, it adds much to Ferrier's responsibility for others which may be more or less so; whereas going on the broad principle of publishing the 'Noctes' in their integrity, with a kind of general apology for anything that may be objectionable on the score of personality, ought to be admitted if the 'Noctes' are deserving of republication.

"I am afraid our chaps will not get into Sevastopol this bout," the Major adds in April '55. "Sixteen days' bombardment and no assault does not look well. Our force must be very insufficient in numbers, I suspect, even if the defences are sufficiently destroyed, for an assault."

Layard has put his foot very stupidly in it. When there is so much justly to complain of, to lay hold of a case that turns out to have happened in the regular course of the service and make a regular personal attack, and then doggedly stick to it

when it was fairly disproved, shows a sad want of sense. I am afraid he'll come to no good, that man.

This was perhaps a rash assertion; but I do not suppose that the fortunate explorer of Nineveh ever came to very much in the House of Commons.

Early in 1856 the Major was again in London, and sends many pleasant notes to his brother of the people he saw and met there. Among others I find various reports of myself, which are comically pathetic so long after date, when I have almost ceased to recognise the young person, usually called Katie between the brothers, as having anything to do with myself. I had begun by that time, it appears, to write reviews and general articles of all kinds, which were approved to a considerable extent, and in such terms as the following: "If you are sure of Hamley, Oliphant, and Katie for this month, we shall have a first-rate number," &c. Oliphant, I need scarcely say, was Laurence Oliphant, often called Larry, with the family love of nicknames. The Major, however, is more respectful when he reports having had a long chat with "Mrs Oliphant" in February 1856. This was the bright time of my early life, soon to disappear in clouds of trouble and sorrow:—

They have a nice house off Regent's Park at the head of Portland Place [really Harley Street], a nice situation. She was working away at Sydney Smith. She did not think his works correspond with his reputation; so he will be let down a peg or two. His religious spirit she thought objectionable, or really that he had none at all. She said, "How very clever 'Firmilian' is! I had no idea it was so good till I read 'Balder.'" . . . We afterwards went to her husband's studio. He is devoting his time entirely to painting on glass, and seemed in good spirits, and getting on very well, he said. A nephew of Dickin-

son's, a Mr Evans, appears to be with him as a partner or assistant. I asked him if he was engaged on the same work with Mr Oliphant, and he said, "Oh yes," as if a partner.

I may be allowed to explain that my husband had begun to design for Painted Glass very early in his life, while carrying on his studies as a painter; but had been gradually absorbed into that branch of art, which had the advantage of paying at once, though with many regrets, always hoping to resume the exercise of a higher, and in the meantime painting and exhibiting a picture now and then. The period of Major Blackwood's visit was exactly at the beginning of an effort on his part to have his designs carried out under his own eye, the execution of them having always been unsatisfactory to him. But as he was an artist and not a man of business, the endeavour did not prove very successful in a pecuniary point of view, and accelerated the progress of the illness which had already begun to lay its grasp upon him. Mr Sebastian Evans, who is referred to above, was not a partner, for the excellent reason that his elder brother had discovered before we did that, notwithstanding a number of commissions and plenty to do, the profits of the business were very little to build upon. We poor young people, delighted with the fact that the work was better done than ever before, and that there was money enough to get on with, were in our ignorance and hopefulness superior to any technicalities of a balance-sheet. I am glad to have the opportunity of saying this, as Mr W. B. Scott in his unhappy 'Reminiscences,' where none of his friends escaped a dart, has represented my husband as abandoning his work in consequence of my own sudden (and undeserved)

success in literature—an imputation so bitterly untrue that Francis Oliphant died of his work after a few years' too strenuous exertions, leaving his wife, more robust but less fortunate, to struggle through more than half a lifetime, through many sorrows, alone. The little tragedy is no uncommon one, but not the less sad nor true.

I may add, as an instance of an artist's mode of conducting business, that one of my husband's last commissions was for the windows in the chancel of the principal church in Aylesbury, a place with which we had no sort of connection. All these windows were given by private donors except one, which it was feared would have to be left blank for want of funds. Mr Oliphant, with all the dislike of an artist to leave his work incomplete, promptly made a gift to the Aylesbury Church of the window that was wanting. The reader will probably think that this was as ingenious a mode of doing away with the profits of that particular piece of business as could well be invented, though to us it seemed the most natural and pleasant thing in the world. As his death occurred at Rome, I think within the year, the incumbent of the church made this window into a memorial of him—a graceful act, which gave some forlorn pleasure to his widow, then just returning with her little children to an altered life at home.

I am afraid all this is too personal; but the reader will excuse a momentary aberration. When we grow old our past lives become so much history, upon which we look back with very little sense of its being us, in our own persons, who traversed (how could we do it?) those darkling paths through the valley of the

shadow, and hard climbings up cliff and scaur, which make up to many the sum of life.

In contrast with these humble matters, let me give (it is in the same letter) the Major's account of the apotheosis of Samuel Warren, who had just then attained one of the points of his ambition by his election to Parliament as member for Midhurst. It has been a temptation difficult to resist, to refrain from weaving into this history the most amusing record of the life of Warren, which is to be found in these pages. He was always the chief figure in those pleasant episodes of London life which diversified the story of the brothers, from the very first outset of Alexander and Robert; the most lively and diverting figure, often disapproved of, sometimes quite exasperating in his play with life and literature, never remembering that there were (usually) only thirty days in a month, and only so many pages in a magazine, almost always too late, too long, keeping the Editors on tenter-hooks of expectation, furious with them when they cut short his papers or excised some favourite passage, as we have seen the young men do with a courage almost super-editorial: though every controversy ended in tears and laughter of reconciliation, and the vain, overweening, open-hearted, and simple-minded man conquered all grievances with his exuberance of life and jest, the magnanimity that mingled with his vanity, and the real affection and friendship that lay under all. They had, notwithstanding all their struggles, and all their Scottish shame for their friend when he exposed himself to the less friendly laughter of others, the most amazing admiration for and confidence in him; and were almost as pleased with his successes as he was himself,

though immensely amused by his narratives of these successes, to which they did not fail to add the necessary grain of salt, even while most excited by their hero's glory. As Alexander and Robert had felt towards Warren in the forties, so did John and William feel for him nearly twenty years after, still and always looking for something wonderful from his pen, and so dazzled by their faith and friendship that John Blackwood, the acutest of critics, in the maturity of his judgment, still looked for a day to come in which the world would acknowledge the beauty and excellence of 'The Lily and the Bee.'

This incident begins with "a very kind note from Delane," who had printed in the 'Times' a specially good report of Warren's speech at Midhurst and of the election proceedings. Delane's letter was in reply to one of Warren's, "and saying, though they were not likely to agree in politics, he could still rejoice in the success of an old friend."

Major Blackwood to his Brother John.

LONDON, 15*th February* 1856.

Macdonald was sent down by the 'Times' to Midhurst, and the member says no doubt he was sent "to tear me to pieces —but he is a gentleman and saw it would not do." He was struck with the speech,—"I watched him every now and then."

He had been dining at Sir Fitzroy Kelly's on Tuesday—a select party of thirty, to meet Sir Edmund Lyons, the Duke of Wellington, Bishop of Exeter, Lord Stanley, &c. Warren's account was very fine. He was rather late, and his name was announced in a loud tone. Of course there was a buzz in the room—the new member for Midhurst! The first person he came upon was the Duke. "I turned instantly off to Kelly and shook hands with him." Well, at the table the Duke was

seated opposite to him, having taken down the Marchioness of Salisbury, a magnificent creature, and of course the Duke was noticed telling the lovely lady who was sitting opposite. After the ladies retired Lord Stanley called Warren to sit beside him, and the Duke was again opposite. His Grace now stretched out his hand and exclaimed, "Let me have the honour of shaking hands with you, Mr Warren, as member for Midhurst. I am heartily glad to see you there." The Bishop, who was next the Duke, then held out his hand and desired to congratulate Mr Warren as warmly."

The next letter is full of amusing details, including a scene of Warren at home which we may permit ourselves to quote. It begins by an account of the great "sale of Caird," over 700 copies in a day or two. This was the sermon preached before the Queen, and called, 'Religion in Common Life,' which had been brought out with considerable flourish of trumpets, and had fully justified the good opinion of the Editor. I suppose I must have become by this time a sort of general utility woman in the Magazine, as I remember being called upon to write a short article on this at a moment's notice, which I did in the midst of a removal, with a flying pen, in a room unoccupied as yet by anything but dust and rolled-up carpets, where a table and an inkpot had been hurriedly set out for me. Never was trumpet blown under more disadvantageous circumstances. Major Blackwood's visit to town on this occasion must have been a more than usually amusing one :—

I suspect Larry [Oliphant] would like to finger some coin shortly. He mentioned to me the first day I saw him that he had only got fifty pounds for his communications to the 'Times,' which he did not think over-handsome. There were ten letters, and some of them very long. Under the circumstances I don't

think it was much, and they might have been more liberal; but, as the sagacious lad said, Morris thought the lift the 'Times' had given 'Minnesota' ought to be taken into account.

I dined with Dallas on Saturday. She is a nice, frank, honest-hearted creature, I should say [his wife, Miss Glynn the actress], with a tremendous pair of eyes, good eyes, but rather loud. They are evidently very happy. There was rather a queer lot at dinner. A Mr F. and his wife, a cleverish man and jester, but decidedly coarse; Dr Mackay, of the 'Illustrated News'; Erasmus Wilson, a very acute-like fellow; a Mr Crossland and his wife, both devout believers in spirit-rapping—I never heard anything like the trash he uttered. Many apologies were made for Emma's not having been asked. I could not let them know she was here until after I was invited. They called upon us next day and sat for some time. Emma liked her. She is quite unaffected and pleasant in manner. Still it is a pity for Dallas. He is evidently a gentleman both in feelings and manners. Mrs F. has astonished Emma most. I could hardly keep from grinning while the two were talking, the contrast of manner was so great.

We had a very pleasant party at Warren's on Monday. There was present his aunt (the favourite sister of his sainted mother!), her son, and Kettle. The aunt is really a very fine old lady. I do not know that I have ever seen one who had finer features and expression. I should think much of the company of her distinguished nephew would send the old lady to a better world before her time. So old Dickinson said, "I am not so strong as I used to be, and really Warren is too much for me now." As soon as the cloth was removed, Sam Warren, M.P., craved a bumper to the health of his venerated relative, whereupon he took her hand and dutifully kissed it, and then started off in a hand-gallop to give a full detail of the last greatness which had been thrust upon her nephew, and of all that he was to do—as the best way of explaining which he pulled from his pocket two letters which he thought it would interest the company to hear. The first was his own to Lord Derby, assuring his lordship, the noble leader of the Conservative party, of his fealty, and the second Lord Derby's reply.

As he had no sooner finished reading them than he asked me in a most impressive tone if I did not think "Johnny would like to see them," you will probably be in possession of their contents before this. The letters and the speech were capital, but the idea of his making the latter in honour of his aunt, and instantly flying off to himself, struck me as exceedingly comical. I had great difficulty in preserving proper gravity. The only one who troubled me was that little villain Edward, who was sitting next me, and looked up in my face every now and then. The boy has a turn for humour. Thank goodness neither you nor Jim were present!

There is no saying what Warren may do, he has ability for anything. He told me he does not fear any speaker in the House. He has watched them all, and is confident he can do better. I really believe he can: the more I see of him the more convinced I am of his genius.

This confidence, however, I fear, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, was not justified. Mr Warren made little impression there.

Amid the records of Major Blackwood's dinings-out I found with the greatest relief his account of a little party of mine, the remembrance of which has haunted me for forty years! This ought to be a note *for ladies only.* One of those undesirable domestic calamities which shake our houses to their foundations had happened on the morning of that day. Something, I forget what, had happened to my cook, and in the reckless credulity of youth I had taken a substitute on her own estimate of her powers. The consequences were disastrous. To this day I remember with a shudder a certain dish of chicken cutlets intended to be particularly delicate and dainty. Let us not dwell on such horrors, even in recollection. The reader will be amused to hear that I pursued this little dinner through the Major's reminiscences with

inexpressible anxiety, and found, with a relief which was beyond words, that he only commented a little on the company, and did not say, "The dinner was very bad; there was one dish——" which was what I had feared. Let us be thankful that our guests, if sometimes critical, do not always see the weakness of our performances as we see them ourselves.

There are a great many reflections of the political discussions of the day in these letters, which our space does not permit us to take in. It is curious to be called back to the heat and bitterness with which both parties and all classes regarded the bungling in the Crimea—the incompetence of the generals and feebleness of the Government — sometimes, we fear, unjustly; but there is no doubt about the strength of the general feeling. Many things have altered since these days. For one thing, Disraeli, now the idol of so large a party, was then the most abused and the most distrusted of men, his power grudgingly acknowledged, his person despised, and every prejudice arrayed against him. Nobody in those days had thought of the primroses nor the curious change of public sentiment which they betoken. He was a necessary evil to the Conservative party. They could not do without him, yet his elevation was bitter to them, and his extraordinary gifts so many grievances. The Major reports a long conversation with Mr Newdigate, in which the bitter dissatisfaction of the time seems to have found expression in much criticism, in which the Duke of Newcastle, Sidney Herbert, and many others, had a severe share:—

His opinion of Dizzy is not good, as you know, I fancy; but he expressed it very fully to-day, and said he was disposed

to act very much like Peel when in power. . . . The best men of the Conservative party had either voted very unwillingly with him or stayed away. We could not go wrong to go at the cursed Peelites, the incapacity of Newcastle and Sidney Herbert, and the War Department generally. Lord Raglan he did not think so much to blame as was generally supposed. We might go for Prince Albert too if we liked. The Foreign Enlistment Bill was a job to give the Duke of Saxe-Coburg a command.

Presently a change of Ministry threw intense excitement into the various circles of Tory politicians, and the terrible moment of suspense when nobody knew exactly what he was to get, or whether he was to get anything, is well reflected in the Major's letter. He found the household of Warren in all the agonies of expectation, quivering at every summons at the door :—

23rd February 1858.

The Judge Advocate-Generalship is what has been given him by the papers, and it is worth £2500 a-year: he would accept it. He had heard nothing, and knew nothing but what you will have seen. He is to send Edward along here to-night if he hears aught. He would not let me call at the house, they are all too anxious: I had proposed looking in upon him in the evening. After leaving him I went to Bulwer, with some hesitation, I confess, independent of Warren's strong advice not to go. Conceive, my dear fellow, the state he must be in, expecting to join the Cabinet [the Major adds with a thrill of sympathetic excitement].

But Bulwer's splendid calm was like that of one of his own heroes, almost beyond humanity. His visitor was admitted at once, and the self-controlled politician discoursed freely. Gladstone had refused to join Lord Derby; but "had he, Bulwer, been employed to negotiate with Gladstone, he thinks he might

have managed things differently." Of another eminent politician Sir Edward, with the curious suggestion, "His father does not like him, he thought," added, "Though he had great weight in the House, he never could be popular, because *he was not a good fellow.*" This, of course, does not mean that he was not a good man. The arrangement of a probable Ministry, thus given in the very shades of Olympus by the expectant statesman hoping to be one of them, yet nobly ignoring that hope, is curious:—

Bulwer thought Stanley should have the Board of Control: that would have conciliated him and been of service, for the Radicals look to him. Ellenborough, Minister of War; Dizzy, Foreign Secretary; with Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House. So, he thought, they would have been able to work the House. . . . The Duchy of Lancaster he said he would like better than any other office, if he was asked to join; however, he would rather not. I don't believe him in this: he only fancies he would not until asked.

In this astute conjecture the Major was evidently right; and there could not be a better exposition of that attitude of waiting upon Providence and promotion, as exemplified in instances so very different, than this letter gives.

A curious story of the manner in which Bulwer (now Cabinet Minister and Secretary for the Colonies: the letter is without date, but probably was written a little later than the above) discovered the stealer of a despatch which had been published by the 'Daily News' may be given here. "It exceeds anything he could have written in a novel," the Major says.

He was determined to find him out, he said. His colleagues, at least some of them in the Cabinet, pooh-poohed the thing,

and wished him to pass it over. However, he would not, and drew up a minute for the editor of the 'Daily News,' putting it to his honour to assist him in the discovery. This he sent by our little friend Wolff [Sir H. D. Wolff!] and the précis-writer in the Colonial office, a man of the world, and of tact, a Liberal in politics. After some discussion with the editor and several meetings, he gave them a clue so far: he gave up the envelope in which the despatch had been sent, but cut out all the writing on it. Bulwer on receiving it instantly sent for the man who has charge of the stationery in his office. Such envelopes had never been used there. He sent for our friend Macculloch. He, on inquiry at the Stationery Office, said such envelopes had been supplied to the War Office and sent abroad. . . . The editor of the 'Daily News' was again applied to, and the rascality of the transaction strongly pointed out. He said he had promised not to give up the fellow's name; however, said he, it is the name of an island not very far from England, of more than one syllable. Jersey, Guernsey, and some others were mentioned. He said it is one of them. They now thought they knew their man, and went to the Colonial Office, when, lo! the sub-librarian meets them and said, "I think I have now some clue to the thief; at all events, it is right Sir Edward should know what my suspicions are." "And we have a clue too," say they. "Does your party's name begin with a G?" "Yes." "Is it the same as one of the Channel Islands?" "Yes; Guernsey, Wellington Guernsey."

It seems he had applied to Bulwer for some office, and had been very civilly refused. He was greatly incensed at this, and wrote an impudent letter, talking about the number of members of Parliament who were interested in him. This he showed to the sub-librarian, who was connected in some way with him. The latter pointed out the folly of sending such a communication, and it was destroyed. The fellow, however, said Sir Edward should repent not giving him the situation. After the theft of the despatch he (the librarian) met Guernsey again, and the subject being talked of, he said, "D—— the fellow who took it; he might have lost you your situation!" The librarian, in turning the thing over in his mind afterwards, thought—How did he know that I was im-

plicated, or that it was stolen from my office? Then he recollected that Guernsey had been left one day in the library, and when he (the librarian) returned, had said something rather confusedly, "Do you think I am stealing your secrets?" All this was reported to Bulwer, and the opinion of the Attorney-General taken. "This is not evidence," said he, "unless the editor speaks." Guernsey was to sail for America immediately on some employment of the Home Office. "I determined then and there to take my chance and arrest him," Bulwer said. You will see the fellow's examination in the 'Observer.'

This is a curious story, and might do very well for one of the detective romances so dear to the readers of to-day, though no doubt Dr Conan Doyle would reject so very clear a clue as that of the "island near England"; but honour among thieves being one of the most primitive of principles, we doubt whether the conduct of the editor of the 'Daily News' would be approved by any fine tribunal of literary (or thievish) justice.

Among these political notes may come here a letter of John Blackwood, dated May 22, 1860, in which the two leaders of the opposite parties appear in a light-hearted mood:—

John Blackwood to his Brother William.

I found Delane as hearty and delighted to see me as usual. He rejoiced me by the information that Hardman would be in town next week. He had written to Morris that I was to be in town, and as there was nothing doing in Madrid he would like to have a holiday and come to London. So says Delane, "I told Morris to telegraph to him to come at once, and we would all have a lark; and as he is not a fellow to let grass grow at his heels, you may expect to see him on Wednesday or so." He said Hardman was a fellow whom it was a perfect pleasure to have anything to do with. No mistake could ever occur with him.

Delane had been with his friend Palmerston last night, who is heartily sick of his Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, however, has no intention of resigning. P. said to him that the French Emperor had schemes and plans in every direction, and part of what he said Delane thinks he intended Persigny, who was close at hand, to hear. Delane remarked that there was prospect of such a harvest for newspapers. "I fear so," replied the Premier.

In the paddock at the Derby Pam and Lord Derby were going about chaffing each other. Derby said he was sorry he had not a better horse to run. "Oh," says Pam, "you could not expect to win both on Monday and Wednesday." "Well, old fellow, I know which day *you* wanted me to win." "You're not far wrong," says Pam.

The division or the race, which was it? Thirty years back it is a little difficult to make out what the Monday's victory was.

"Dizzy" comes in more favourably than usual in the next note from the same hand:—

I fell in with Dizzy at the Carlton just now, and had a long talk. His great idea is to dispose of the Reform Bill without its going to the Lords, in which he thinks he will succeed. I asked if he had been reading the Magazine. He said he did read the political article regularly; that they were excellent —"in fact, the Magazine is the only organ we have."

Here are two delightful notes of easier and more private life. No doubt the "Velasquez" of Edinburgh could be nobody but Sir John Watson Gordon, an exceedingly well-known and popular painter of his day, though we fear his works have not preserved their popularity with an ungrateful posterity.

He told us rather a good story of Velasquez, who was at the Academy dinner on Saturday. Velasquez said: "I was seated at the cross table among a heap of great folk, Dukes

and Marquises. There was Chief Baron Pollock, Sir F. Williams, and others I didna ken; but they a' kent me!" A further contribution to this story comes from Aytoun, who had been present on the occasion. Aytoun said he had been dining at the Academy last night and toasted Sir John and the members, eulogising Sir John as by universal consent the first portrait-painter in Europe. He was rewarded on sitting down by Sir John whispering in his ear, "Admirable! you have hit the right nail on the head this time!"

Excellent Sir John! who could object to vanity so simple and sincere?

I will add but one other extract from the Major's pleasant letters. It is a literary testimonial which it would be unfair to omit. Major Blackwood had gone to Richmond to visit the Lewes pair, then resident there. I am not sure whether the secret of George Eliot had by this time been at least partially revealed; for the brothers went on speaking, even to each other, of her as *he* for some time. The date of the letter, however, is, alas! only "P. N. Row, 5 o'clock," which leaves the imagination free to range over two or three years:—

I have just returned from Richmond. G. E. did not show: he is such a timid fellow, Lewes said. He was very pleasant, and talked in a very handsome way of his connection with us, saying of all editors he had ever had to do with, and he had had to do with many, you and Lord Jeffrey were the most agreeable.

"I saw," adds the Major, "*a* Mrs Lewes," who no doubt was "the timid fellow" *in propriâ personâ*, so that the secret was still being kept.

I am very glad to have been able to find so many letters of the period during which Major Blackwood was in full work as partner and sharer in all his

brother's occupations. His kindness, his humorous perceptions, his strong interest in political and public matters, as well as his excellent judgment, and that wonderful unity of family feeling which was so strong in the Blackwood brothers, enabling them, as we have seen, to work as one man in all their affairs, first the elder pair and then the younger, unanimous in holding and preserving the inheritance their father had bequeathed to them, will, we trust, impress the reader, and show him, better than any mere description can do, the manner of man he was. The gentle-hearted soldier turned civilian, but never forgetting the training, whether to subordination or command, of his military life, is, happily, a figure wonderfully well known among us. I used to think the old officers of the Company's service bore an added grace, as if their long intercourse with races inferior to ourselves in modern civilisation, but which, above all in the army, had so often gained the respect and liking of their leaders, had given additional patience, additional gentleness to those well-known qualities of the experienced and noble type of soldier. Colonel Newcome was but a recent revelation to the world; but we have all known individuals like our Major, whose memory made Colonel Newcome at once recognisable and dearly welcome to us all.

I am tempted to join on another scrap of personal history to that of my old friend before I end this portion of his family record. I had myself gone through many vicissitudes of life when I found myself in the winter of '60 in Edinburgh, whither I had come temporarily with my little family of three fatherless children. I was poor, having only my own

exertions to depend on, though always possessing an absolute-foolish courage (so long as the children were well, my one formula) in life and providence. But I had not been doing well for some time. It will perhaps not be wondered at, considering the circumstances. My contributions sent from Italy, where I had passed a year watching my husband's waning life, had been, as I can see through the revelations of the Blackwood letters, pushed about from pillar to post, these kind-hearted men not willing to reject what they knew to be so important to me, yet caring but little for them, using them when there happened to be a scarcity of material; and after my return things were little better. Several of my articles were rejected, and affairs began to look very dark for me. Why I should have formed the idea that in these circumstances, when there was every appearance that my literary gift, such as it was, was failing me, they would be likely to entertain a proposal from me for a serial story, I can scarcely now tell; but I was rash and in need. At the time I was living in Fettes Row, in a little house consisting of the ground-floor and the basement below, a rather forlorn locality, but commanding a wide prospect—only, it is true, of houses and waste land, but also of a great deal of sky and air, always particularly agreeable to me. I walked up to George Street, up the steep hill, with my heart beating, not knowing (though I might very well have divined) what they would say to me. There was, indeed, only one thing they could say. They shook their heads: they were very kind, very unwilling to hurt the feelings of the poor young woman, with the heavy widow's veil hanging about her like a cloud.

No; they did not think it was possible. I remember very well how they stood against the light, the Major tall and straight, John Blackwood with his shoulders hunched up in his more careless bearing, embarrassed and troubled by what they saw and no doubt guessed in my face, while on my part every faculty was absorbed in the desperate pride of a woman not to let them see me cry, to keep in until I could get out of their sight. I remember also the walk down the hill, and a horrible organ that played "Charlie is my darling," and how one line of the song came into my mind, "The wind was at his back." The wind, alas! was not at my back, I reflected, but strong in my face, both really and metaphorically, the keen north-east that hurries up these slopes as if it would blow every fragile thing away.

I went home to find my little ones all gay and sweet, and was occupied by them for the rest of the day in a sort of cheerful despair—distraught, yet as able to play as ever (which they say is part of a woman's natural duplicity and dissimulation). But when they had all gone to bed, and the house was quiet, I sat down—and I don't know when, or if at all, I went to bed that night; but next day (I think) I had finished and sent up to the dread tribunal in George Street a short story, which was the beginning of a series of stories called the 'Chronicles of Carlingford,' which set me up at once and established my footing in the world. These books, I fear, are no longer very well remembered by any one; but they formed the greatest triumph, at least in a pecuniary point of view, of my life, and settled upon better foundations my after-career. I have no doubt that it was to the two kind and sympathetic brothers almost

as great a relief as to myself when it was thus proved that my little vein was not worked out as they feared.

This was but a few months before the end of Major Blackwood's life. His health had been much shaken for some time. On one of his visits to London he caught, no one could tell how, smallpox, after having walked unharmed, as he himself records with wonder, through infected places in India where the disease was raging at its worst. Whether it was this terrible malady which undermined his strength I cannot tell; but I think he was never thoroughly well again, becoming subject to cold and every evil thing that was about, recovering and falling ill again, yet always with hopes of restoration, until at length his much-tried strength failed altogether. He died in April 1861, having spent nearly a dozen years in the business and in faithful support of his brother and kindly service to all men. He lived long enough to set several of his sons out in the world,—the eldest, his grandfather's namesake and representative, being from the first destined for the publishing office, while George and Charles followed in his own steps as officers in India. The family was large, but death made havoc among the band of boys who had surrounded the Major,—happily, however, for him, not until he himself was gone.

I find the following letter to Mr Langford, written a few days after the Major's death, and pathetic in its deep and simple affection :—

John Blackwood to Mr Langford.

April 15, 1861.

Your kind letters express the attachment and respect for the Major which I am sure you felt—indeed it was impossible to

know my brother as you did without honouring as well as liking him. . . . William's death makes a dreary blank to me in every way; but I can feel surely that a good man has gone to his Maker, and what a difference that feeling and hope makes in thinking of all the happy cordial days we have passed together.

From this time John Blackwood was left alone in the conduct of the Magazine and of the many other affairs of the business, at least until his nephew had sufficient years and experience to help. The third volume of this book will contain something of the great and ever-widening correspondence which filled his life, and of some new ventures and successes full of literary interest; and I am glad to say that my labours among these enormous accumulations of letters will be very much lightened and relieved by a sketch of his personal and private life from the pen of his only daughter Mary, now Mrs Porter, the oft-quoted infant-critic of many of his letters, of whose "wise replies" he never was tired of boasting, and in whom his pride was great. This volume will probably be published in the course of the ensuing year.

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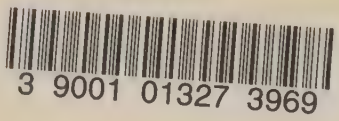
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